



CABINET AGENDA

Monday, 25th February, 2013, at 10.00 am Ask for: **Karen Mannering /
Louise Whitaker**
Darent Room, Sessions House, County Telephone: **(01622) 694367 /
Hall, Maidstone** **694433**

Cabinet Membership:

Mr P Carter, Leader of the County Council (Chairman), Mr A King MBE, Mr M C Dance, Mr G K Gibbens, Mr R G Gough, Mr P M Hill OBE, Mr J D Simmonds, Mr B J Sweetland, Mr M J Whiting and Mrs J Whittle.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

Introduction / Webcasting

1. Apologies
2. Declaration of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this meeting
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd January 2013 (Pages 1 - 16)
4. Decisions from Scrutiny Committee - 12 December 2012 (Pages 17 - 20)
5. Any items which the Chairman decides are relevant or urgent
6. 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy (Pages 21 - 72)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services
Friday, 15 February 2013

Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 23 January 2013.

PRESENT: Mr M C Dance, Mr G K Gibbens, Mr R W Gough, Mr P M Hill, OBE, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr J D Simmonds, Mr B J Sweetland, Mr M J Whiting and Mrs J Whittle

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D Shipton (Head of Financial Strategy BSS), Ms Liz Harrison (Economic Development Manager, BSS), Phil Lamacraft (Senior Commercial manager, BSS)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Cockburn (Corporate Director of Business Strategy and Support), Mr M Austerberry (Corporate Director, Environment and Enterprise), Mrs A Beer (Corporate Director of Human Resources), Mr M Burrows, (Director of Consultation and Communications), Mr A Wood (Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement), Mr P Leeson (Corporate Director Education, Learning and Skills Directorate), Ms A Honey (Corporate Director, Customer and Communities), Mr A Ireland (Corporate Director, Families and Social Care), Ms M Peachey (Kent Director Of Public Health), Mr G Wild (Director of Governance and Law) and Mrs L Whitaker (Democratic Services)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Paul Carter, Leader of the County Council

27. Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 December 2012

(Item 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2012 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

28. Any items which the Chairman decides are relevant or urgent

(Item 4)

None

29. Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2013/14 & KCC Draft Budget 2013/14

(Item 5 – report by Mr J Simmonds, Cabinet member for Finance and Business Support and Mr A Wood, Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement)

Cabinet considered a report detailing the Local Government Finance settlement 2013/14 (for information) and the KCC Draft Budget 2013/14 (for endorsement and comment to County Council).

Mr Simmonds introduced the report to Cabinet; he spoke initially about the Local Government Finance Settlement. He reported that the settlement was one of the most complex to date and thanked officers for their hard work in realising the budget. The complexity of the settlement had been further compounded by the late release of information; the settlement was announced on Thursday 20th December 2012. Therefore, the analysis of the information, calculation of the effects and modification to the draft budget had been completed in a very short time.

He continued to describe the draft budget for consideration by Cabinet; in particular he referred to the following:

- That it included the detailed Local Government Settlement and the possible implications for KCC and the budget forecast for the 2013/14. In addition the report contained information regarding the Capital Programme, Treasury Strategy, possible tax base and a recommendation to Personnel Committee regarding a staff pay offer.
- He reported, and apologised for, the necessity of some very late changes to the draft budget that had been necessary since the agenda for the meeting was published.
- He referred to the extensive consultation that had been undertaken to gather views of residents on the draft budget. He regretted that more people had not taken the opportunity to be involved, but did not feel that this was a result of any fault in the exercise by KCC. However the responses that were received, particularly from the two MORI workshops, had helped to shape the budget and to identify changes.
- He reminded cabinet that, three years ago the administration had agreed that savings of £340 million would have to be made over the next four years. This and other economic factors would affect residents of Kent, and it was agreed that as far as was possible Council Tax would be frozen in order to alleviate some of those pressures. In order to achieve this freeze, Kent must show a balanced budget.
- Although the process has been difficult the current administration had now produced 12 consecutive years of balanced budgets. This achievement had been further pronounced in the last two years when significant savings had been expected and KCC had not only met those requirements but had delivered an underspend. He thanked not only the Finance Directorate but each individual Directorate for carefully monitoring spending and adapting practices over the years.
- That KCC recognised the dangers inherent on relying on one-off payments such as the Council Tax Freeze Grant and other similar payments from Government and he assured Cabinet Members that where payments were accepted and spent contingencies were in place to maintain services should grants be revoked. As an example of this practice he reported to members that last year 50% of the Council Tax Freeze monies had been held over to this year to mitigate any ill effects should the grant be stopped.
- He argued that although the Rt Hon Mr Pickles claimed that the cut to local government spending was 1.9%, that the effect of the cut in real terms for KCC would be a further £40 million cut in government funding and that this equated to a 9.5% reduction and equated to a 4% reduction in the Council's total spend.
- Two major changes were apparent within the settlement that had not been forecast. Changes to the calculation of the Early Intervention Grant and the

Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant created a further £13.5million spending gap which at the last minute the draft budget had to be accommodated to find meet. These changes were not part of the consultation but the budget had been adapted in such a way that front line services had not been impacted and therefore the results of the consultation were still reflected and no further consultation was deemed to be necessary.

The Cabinet Member continued, and reported on the Treasury Management Strategy

- He reported that the Council had managed cash flow in such a way that no further borrowing had been required. The disparity between the return on money in the bank and the interest on savings was high and therefore it had been considered sensible to use reserves to satisfy need and moreover, to cover maturing borrow to the value of £75million.

He further described the budget recommendations:

- 2 full quarter figures for 2012/13 had allowed a greater level of assurance in the underspend predicted and carried forward in the 2013/14 predictions. However, Mr Simmonds urged caution and reminded members that changes in levels of need and other external factors could impact on the level of underspend realised.
- He was concerned that the administration had been criticised by political opponents for spending reserves. He argued that the decision was the right one for reasons previously described and, particularly in light of government advice regarding sensible levels of reserves, was justified. The Council's reserves were largely allocated to specific contingency plans, but without these the general reserve was approximately £32 million, which would equate to approximately 2-3 weeks turnover. This was in line with Government recommendations for unallocated reserves at an authority of the size of KCC. He was happy that the spend to date had been necessary and proportionate but that the reserves were now at an appropriate level and would not be utilised further unless absolutely necessary.

Mr Simmonds referred to the recommendations that would be put to the County Council meeting and recommended that Cabinet endorse them for adoption by the Council. Comments were also welcomed.

The recommendations to County Council were proposed as:

1. Cabinet is asked to endorse the following, for consideration and approval by County Council on 14th February 2013:
 - (a) The Revenue Budget proposals for 2013/14 including the proposed changes since the consultation, included in the published draft Budget, and the resulting change to the overall budget requirement.
 - (b) A requirement from Council Tax of £509.579m to be raised through precept on District Councils.
 - (c) A Council tax freeze at 2012/13 levels. Levels for each property band as set out below.

Council Tax Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£698. 52	£814. 94	£831. 36	£1,047. 78	£1,280. 62	£1,513. 46	£1,746. 30	£2,095. 56

(d) The Capital investment proposals for 2013/14, together with the necessary borrowing, revenue, grants, capital receipts, renewals, external funding and other earmarked sums to finance the programme. Note that delivery of the programme will be subject to the approval to spend on individual schemes and the level of Government support available in future years

(e) The Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix B of the draft MTFP 2013/15

2. Cabinet is asked to agree the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in section 4 of the draft MTFP 2013/15

Mr Simmonds continued. He reported on the situation with Council Tax and explained that the responsibility for Council Tax Benefit Grant had been transferred from Central to Local Government and simultaneously reduced by 10%. In addition restrictions on how the council could mitigate this reduction were placed on the grant. The unfortunate consequence would be that some households on a lower income would now be expected to pay Council Tax where they had not previously. Pre-emptive work had been undertaken with districts in order that they were prepared to manage the potential consequences of this change and additionally financial support had been offered to alleviate any negative impact, whilst also aiding the effective and efficient recovery of the tax which formed a crucial element of the County budget.

Mr Alex King reminded Members of the Cabinet that in 1997 when the Conservative took charge of the Council reserves were at a very low level and had since been replenished.

Mr Wood, Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement and Mr Shipton, Head of Financial Strategy were invited to speak further on the technical detail behind some of the content. The officers referred to the following information to which Cabinet should have particular regard:

- Changes would be necessary between the draft under consideration and the version that would be presented for agreement by the County Council in February – and detailed the ones that were identified currently:
 - Ordinary residence:

Government guidance on how to establish a person's ordinary residence had been received and created possible future financial risk for the Council. Assumptions had needed to be made about the number of individuals who would present to KCC for support for future care. After careful consideration and work by Mr Ireland, Corporate Director for Families and Social care and Mr Graham Gibbens, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health it was agreed that the

budget be further strengthened against this risk by allocating an additional £750,000 to this area.

- Social Care Prices:
A number of contracts were ready for renewal and while it was expected that savings would be realised through the newly introduced procurement process, after further consideration the initial predictions related to contract costs were considered to have been overly optimistic. Therefore an additional £300,000 - £400,000 had been allocated to cover any unavoidable price increases. It was hoped that these additional allocations would be covered from emerging underspends also not yet reported. In addition it was hoped that there would be surplus on the collection funds that could be diverted, but this would not be known until 31st January 2013.
 - Transfer of NHS Funds from Public Health
£49.8m of funds to be transferred from the NHS for Public health duties to become the responsibility of the Local Authority in April have not yet been reflected in the budget
 - Social Fund
Figures had also been announced and would be included in the final version
 - Collection Fund
The surplus or deficit from this fund, as mentioned, would also be available before the Council meeting and would be included.
 - Early Intervention Grant
The Government had held back £150million as a top slice from this Grant before it was awarded as part of the Local Government Settlement. An announcement would be made as to how that would now be allocated. Officers were hopeful that some of this funding could be secured by Kent to deliver Early Intervention work.
- These changes should be acknowledged by cabinet when considering the recommendations of the report.
 - Mr Wood confirmed that he was satisfied that the current level of reserves was healthy and appropriate and that he had a statutory duty to be so before signing off the draft budget for approval by council.
 - Mr Shipton added that as yet the date for the final settlement announcement was not known and that the settlement on which the draft budget was based was provisional. However no significant changes were expected.

In addition, included within the draft was an estimate for the new Education Services Grant, which replaced the LACSEG but as yet no formal announcement as to its value, had been made. This might continue to be an unknown factor with the budget as it is expected that the grant will be calculated quarterly.

Mr Alex King requested that Cabinet Members and respective Directors spoke in turn about the draft budget and their particular portfolio.

Mr Graham Gibbens, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health drew attention to the following points:

Adult Services:

- He assured members that the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme had been fully costed, and independently reviewed, in order that it was realistic and achievable. He was confident that alongside KCC and colleagues in health the central tenants of the programme were beginning to embed.
- He concurred with Mr Wood's reference to the ongoing pressures that occurred within these services, particularly in relation to certain demographics and the care required by those people with Learning Disabilities. The draft budget this year, as in previous years, was mindful of this and aimed to mitigate those risks wherever possible.

Public Health

- He confirmed Mr Wood's report that £49.8m of funding would be transferred from the NHS to the Local Authority for Public health duties to begin on 1st April 2013.
- The settlement was confirmed for a period of two years.
- He welcomed the settlement, and felt that it reflected negotiations with Government to ensure that Public Health was properly funded.
- He briefly outlined where the Local authority could now have influence and where this funding might be utilised, in particular he highlighted; tobacco control and health inequalities.
- In addition the County Council would work closely with District Councils to ensure their input and involvement.
- He envisaged increased public health commissioning across the council and an emphasis on preventative work aimed at keeping people out of hospital and further integration of the work of Public health and Social care professionals.

Mrs Peachey, Director of Public Health additionally referred to the following:

- That the settlement was agreeable and that government had listened to the views and concerns of Local Government in deciding it. This was particularly the case where issues had arisen around funding levels for West Kent, which had been fully addressed in the final settlement.

Mrs Jenny Whittle, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services referred to the following themes:

- She assured Members that savings within her portfolio were reasonable and achievable and that they would be delivered with great care.
- She explained that her confidence was founded on the recent 'adequate' rating afforded by OFSTED and the benefits this would bring for the council, in particular the ability to recruit experienced, well-qualified and permanent Social Workers therefore reducing the council's reliance on agency workers, who had given great service but could not always provide the consistency that families in crisis needed so badly.
- She argued that early intervention was not only better for the families, where a breakdown might be avoided but also more financially efficient for KCC. As evidence of the success of early intervention, she referred to demand led services, particularly fostering and adoption services which had seen high demand over recent years but where the number of children now needing these services appeared to have plateaued. In addition the number of care proceedings being brought was reducing across the county. This was evidence of the benefits of early intervention and likely to realise a reduction in legal costs within the portfolio budget.

- That efficiencies would not only relate to need management or changes to delivery other savings had been identified too. For example the sharing of management overheads for Children's centres over the 97 sites in the County as it was not financially viable to maintain current levels of one manager per centre. Further savings would continue to be secured by careful scrutiny of contracts with outside providers to ensure value for money.
- A number of permanent appointments at senior level over the last 12 months had helped to make secure the services provided and the delivery of budget targets within this difficult portfolio.

Mr A Ireland, Corporate Director of Families and Social Care made the following further points:

- That there existed a significant invest to save element within the figures for the transformation project, utilising the NHS monies referred to previously, and that those service would be available to view on line in the new financial year.
- That he concurred with Mrs Whittle's comments that the restructure of the Children's Services management structure and detailed review had strengthened the department significantly, and he thanked colleagues in finance for their help with this work.

Mr Mike Whiting, Cabinet member for Education, Learning and Skills addressed the Cabinet. He made the following comments:

- That the next financial year would be one of further change within his portfolio, much of it brought about by changes to legislation and funding.
- Some funding would be devolved to schools, but the responsibility to provide school places, and a good education for the Children of the County would remain with KCC.
- The Budget included a further reduction in spending of 8.7%, on top of the significant savings made over the last two years. In light of this is was encouraging that last year saw the county's best ever results reported.
- KCC was committed to continued spending on school improvements, despite reductions in funding for such work. In addition investment in the early years sector would also continue
- He welcomed the higher than expected cash receipts achieved through sales of services to schools and academies through Edukent and these monies would be reinvested within the Education Portfolio.
- Efficiency savings continued to be realised in the area of Home to School transport, attributed largely to the change in policy and the success of the Kent Freedom Pass. Further innovative work would continue in this area to reduce costs whilst maintaining services for those in need, for example through personalised budgets for families with Children with statements of Special Educational need, where it was appropriate.
- He assured members that despite uncertainty surrounding government funding the budget was deliverable and risks were mitigated and that whilst delivering a balanced budget educational standards would continue to improve and he commended the budget to cabinet for endorsement to County Council

Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director of Education, Learning and Skills added to Mr Whiting's comments:

- He welcomed the County Council's commitment to funding a robust school improvement service, support services for Early Years and provide a skills and employability strategy for 14-24 year olds despite the significant changes to grants and funding from central government. These commitments would allow us to continue to focus on raising educational attainment in Kent.
- That the Education Services Grant would be announced later this month but pre-emptive steps were being taken to further integrate services with other department such as families and Social Care to find efficiencies and reduce costs, whilst maintaining and improving services.

Mr Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member for Highways Environment and Waste made the following comments:

- That the 0.3% increase to the directorate budget was welcomed. However, despite there being no reduction in the overall budget, it was considerably changed from last years. This was largely accredited to the fact that efficiency savings were being made in the delivery of services but that these savings had been directed back into the budget.
- That further savings would be made via the ongoing Joint waste Collection and disposal contracts that existed between KCC and the Borough Councils. In addition these agreements were crucial to continued increase in recycling rates.
- This increased recycling rate would in time be translated to an increase in income generated, and resale of items such as fabric. KCC would lead on this work in the South East of England through South East 7.
- High Speed rail services to Deal and Sandwich would continue to be funded where necessary to support business in the East of the County.
- He thanked, on behalf of the Cabinet, those staff within the Highways department, District staff, residents and schools for their response to the inclement weather in the last 72 hours, which allowed all primary and most secondary routes to remain open all weekend, and most schools to open on Monday morning as normal.
- He assured Cabinet that the hard work and investment within his portfolio would continue. New funding had been secured for resurfacing of roads and a find and fix initiative would begin shortly to correct pothole damage incurred as a result of the weather.

Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform, addressed the Cabinet and made the following points:

- The corporate centre continued to contribute to the savings made by the council in several ways. It had reduced in size to mirror the way in which the Council as a whole had been streamlined. In addition it had restructured by bringing activities into the centre from the departments and then rationalising that activity in order that it could be delivered to the same standard more efficiently.
- Partnership working to provide ICT functions in relation to both the networks and to operational activity had realised efficiency savings for all concerned.
- That the budget referred to work that would take place to reshape the property portfolio, a project which would continue for some years to find innovative solutions to the way in which the council worked and delivered services.

- That the strong positive contribution in this area from Legal Services was welcomed.

Mr Mark Dance, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development, made the following points:

- He reported that it had been possible despite the difficult financial climate to continue to support and in some areas to increase support to businesses in Kent.
- He reported that innovative solutions continued to be sought through business lead groups such as the Business Advisory Board and the Kent Economic Board
- Projects such as 20:20 Vision to be held in April, where 700 businesses were expected to attend along with thousands of guests, and the Kent Excellence in Business Awards continued to be delivered, in conjunction with partner organisations, for the benefit of business in the County
- The budget would allow for the County show to continue to be supported, and this provided a valuable showcase for the rural business community in Kent.
- He thanked Officers within the Directorate, particularly those involved in bid writing at which the Council had been successful in securing funding for various exciting projects such as Expansion East Kent and TIGER.
- Planned activity for the future included a bid to the regional growth fund, round 4 for areas of Kent that has not benefited from the work so far. These areas tended to be more affluent but Mr Dance explained that a bid was being put together which had every chance of success.
- The LEP continued to be crucial to the delivery of infrastructure support projects in the South east and Mr Dance reminded cabinet that it would become more influential.
- The 'Make Kent Quicker' broadband roll out continued to progress and would be rolled out in the near future.

Mrs A Honey, Corporate Director of Customer and Communities made the following additional comments:

- She assured Cabinet that the Council was committed to including and involving staff in changes so that they felt engaged in any changes that might occur to terms and conditions or to the structure of the department within which they worked.

Mr D Cockburn, Corporate Director of Business Strategy and Support added his comments as follows:

- That the drive for continued efficiency of operation would continue in order to consolidate and build upon the success that had been seen during the 2012/13 financial year. In particular, Mr Cockburn referred to the success of procurement savings applied and the introduction of new technology to create more efficient the major corporate systems at KCC. The cost reduction that this provided to the corporate overhead would continue to be diverted to increased resources for the delivery of front line services.
- That cabinet should note that there were £20million of savings contained within the draft budget of the kind he had described; related to efficiency and transformation work

Mr Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities addressed Cabinet as follows:

- That the last year had been difficult for the Customer and Communities Directorate as it had for others. In addition to savings made by the directorate over the previous 5 years; external funding, which currently provided 40% of the directorate income, was reduced as external agencies faced their own funding pressures.
- The savings requirement for the directorate over the life of the next budget would be £5.3million, approximately 7% of the total spent last year.
- Savings identified had been achieved by restructuring management teams, integrating services and streamlining back office functions. However he warned that efficiency savings were finite and some savings identified would have an impact on frontline services and some savings identified would be secured by service transformation.
- These transformation savings would be made in two areas
 - Youth Services
The role of the Council would change from that of deliverer to commissioner with delivery provided by the voluntary and community sector. A robust in-house service would be maintained and the excellence of services provided, maintained.
 - Customer Services Integration
Face-to face interactions and transactions had been migrated to the telephone or on-line.

Mr Hill referred to the Capital programme for which this budget marked the completion of five years of innovative work which had included the completion of the Turner Gallery and Library buildings in various locations across the county. Although he acknowledged that Capita funding would be harder to find in the future he looked forward to rolling out the 'Gateway' programme and to provide Deal with a new Youth Centre.

In conclusion he summarised the Directorate's budget which he believed would deliver saving without detrimental impact on front line services provided for residents of Kent and congratulated the Council's finance team on a difficult budget well managed.

Mrs Honey reiterated Mr Hill's comments about front line services. She reported that currently there were 21 front line services within the directorate and welcomed the council's commitment to protecting all of them in a difficult financial period.

Mr Alex King made the following points:

- That energy, effort and commitment had been shown throughout the organisation to continue to deliver services. He believed that critical to this achievement had been the success of the 'One Council' ethos. He hoped that chief officers would congratulate all of their staff for this.
- That creating budgets especially in such financial times was a difficult and worrying time for many people but he argued that Kent had a significant part to play not only for its residents but for helping to address the issues of the nation
- The county council was not afraid to put the needs of Kent families and businesses first in that process

- He further congratulated the team who had kept the roads of Kent open and safe in the recent snowy weather but he also remarked on the importance of the way in which the work was communicated and that had also been a great success.
- In particular he wished to record the thanks of the Cabinet for the work that officers in Finance had done to create a balanced and timely budget.

Mr King referred cabinet members to the comments of the Scrutiny Committee that had been held on the Monday prior to Cabinet. Mr Simmonds described the Scrutiny Committee as a useful meeting, and noted the information that had been produced. He was glad that useful interactions had been able to take place with the MORI workshops, staff meetings, consultation, scrutiny committee and the discussion taking place all of which would help to shape the budget for the County Council meeting in February.

Having regard for the information received, including the additional information that the Corporate Director of Finance and procurement had provided, Cabinet RESOLVED that:

RECORD OF DECISION

CABINET Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2013/14 & KCC Draft Budget 2013/14 23 January 2013																										
1.	<p>That the following recommendations to be considered by County Council on 14th February 2013 be endorsed for approval:</p> <p>(1) The Revenue Budget proposals for 2013/14 including the proposed changes since the consultation, included in the published draft Budget, and the resulting change to the overall budget requirement.</p> <p>(2) A requirement from Council Tax of £509.579m to be raised through precept on District Councils.</p> <p>(3) A Council tax freeze at 2012/13 levels. Levels for each property band as set out below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="541 1722 1334 2029"> <tr> <td></td> <td>£698.52</td> <td>£814.94</td> <td>£831.36</td> <td>£1,047.78</td> <td>£1,280.62</td> <td>£1,513.46</td> <td>£1,746.30</td> <td>£2,095.56</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Council Tax Band</td> <td>A</td> <td>B</td> <td>C</td> <td>D</td> <td>E</td> <td>F</td> <td>G</td> <td>H</td> </tr> </table>									£698.52	£814.94	£831.36	£1,047.78	£1,280.62	£1,513.46	£1,746.30	£2,095.56	Council Tax Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
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	<p>(4) The Capital investment proposals for 2013/14, together with the necessary borrowing, revenue, grants, capital receipts, renewals, external funding and other earmarked sums to finance the programme. Note that delivery of the programme will be subject to the approval to spend on individual schemes and the level of Government support available in future years</p> <p>(5) The Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix B of the draft MTFP 2013/15</p>
2.	That the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in section 4 of the draft MTFP 2013/15 be agreed
REASON	
1.	In order that the County Council is aware of the view of cabinet in their considerations
2.	In order that the Council has an up to date Treasury Management Strategy in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED	None.
CONFLICTS OF INTEREST	None.
DISPENSATIONS GRANTED	None.

30. Revenue and Budget Monitoring Exception Report

(Item 6 – report by Mr J Simmonds, Cabinet member for Finance and Business Support and Mr A Wood, Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement)

Cabinet received a report on the results of the budget monitoring work completed since the previous report was considered by Cabinet in December 2012

Mr Simmonds introduced the report for Cabinet and drew attention to the following points:

- He emphasised the importance of the monitoring reports in the formulation budget that had been considered in the previous item., Without the careful monitoring of performance, trends and need the assumptions on which the budget was formed would not be possible.
- The Gross underspend to date was £6.7million, an increase of £1.5million, and by he end of the year it was predicted that it would stand at approximately £7.1million. He praised this achievement in light of the difficult savings already made.
- The Education Learning and Skills Directorate underspend was up by £500,000, largely accredited to the savings achieved since the introduction of

the new Home to School transport policy and the popularity of the Freedom pass. As a member who represented a rural area he did note the importance of provision for those areas. These savings were offset slightly by an increase in SEN Home to School spending. This increase reflected an increase in those presenting for and receiving help. The council would continue to seek better and more efficient ways of providing help for these families, including, when the circumstances are appropriate, personalised budgets.

- Specialist Children’s Services showed some over budget spend, largely as a result of legal costs incurred for assistance with cases being pursued and in relation to the support for ARE asylum seekers, a cost which was currently the centre of negotiations with Government.
- Adult Services costs had been reduced over the last few months as a result of a reduction in need, this trend had ceased and was a reminder that predictions in the budget must be carefully monitored.

In addition, Mr Simmonds congratulated Kent County Council on providing, in times of austerity, a Capital Programme valued at £600million.

Mr Sweetland, Cabinet Member for Highways Environment and Waste, spoke further on the comments made by Mr Simmonds about provision of bus services in rural areas. He reminded cabinet that 200 rural bus routes were subsidised by Kent County Council and the 2013/14 budget contained £6million commitment to continue to do so, this had been protected because as Mr Simmonds had rightly said the Freedom Pass and other concessionary schemes were useful only where routes existed.

The popularity of the Freedom Pass continued, with 27,500 now in use. Most recipients paid £100 to receive the pass and this price had been frozen within the 2013/14 and the support for those from low income families would also remain in place for the next financial year.

It was RESOLVED that:

RECORD OF DECISION

CABINET	
Revenue and Budget Monitoring Exception Report	
23 January 2013	
1.	That the forecast revenue and capital budget monitoring position be noted
2.	That the changes to the capital programme be noted
REASON	
1&2	In order that the Cabinet conducts its monitoring activities effectively.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED	
	None.
CONFLICTS OF INTEREST	
	None.
DISPENSATIONS GRANTED	
	None.

31. BDUK - Expanding and Improving Broadband Coverage in Kent

(Item 7 – report by Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform and Mr D Cockburn, Corporate Director of Business Strategy and Support)

Cabinet received a report providing information about the ongoing BDUK project to introduce Broadband to every property in Kent and Medway and ensure that most would be able to access superfast broadband. Members were to have regard to the information contained within the report before taking their decision the recommendation within the exempt report at item 8 of the agenda was considered.

Mr Gough introduced the report for Cabinet and in particular made reference to the following:

- That the project had now progressed to a crucial point. Achievements had been made to secure attractive broadband prospects for Kent, set out in section 3.2 of the report.
- That officers had managed the complex BDUK process well and this had enabled Kent to secure an early position within the scheme.
- That work conducted with DEFRA scheme had strengthened the project and its potential impact on rural communities.
- He thanked officers for the achievement so far secured and for the strong leadership they had provided to the partnership process with District Councils as part of this project.
- That the uncertainties caused by the protracted negotiations on European State Aid at Government level had now been resolved and would not impact negatively on the Council's timeframe as it seemed it might at one point. Mr Gough referred to the report and clarified the timeframe contained therein for members.
- First services would come on line next year and to all properties in 2015.

It was RESOLVED that:

The information within the report be NOTED and considered in conjunction with the information contained within the report at item 8 before a decision was reached.

Exempt Items

Cabinet resolved that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they contained information that could lead to the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

32. BDUK - Expanding and Improving Broadband Coverage in Kent

(Item 8)

(Item 8 – report by Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform and Mr D Cockburn, Corporate Director of Business Strategy and Support)

Cabinet received an exempt report providing further information about the ongoing BDUK project which was exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of schedule 12a of section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972.

Mr Gough presented the report to Cabinet and officers, Liz Harrison, Economic Development Manager and Phil Lamacraft, Senior Commercial Manager were in attendance to respond to questions.

Cabinet discussed the information contained within the report, and that received from the Portfolio holder and officers and having regard to the information received during the public report at item 7 the recommendations within the report were put.

It was RESOLVED that:

RECORD OF DECISION

CABINET BDUK – Expanding and Improving Broadband Coverage 23 January 2013	
1.	That authority be delegated to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform to enter into a contract to deliver the Kent and Medway BDUK project
2.	That authority be delegated to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform to enter into a grant agreement with BDUK to draw down the £9.87 million of Government funding.
REASON	
1&2	In order that the BDUK project can be progressed in a timely and efficient manner and the outcomes delivered to residents of Kent as quickly and efficiently as possible.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED	None.
CONFLICTS OF INTEREST	None.
DISPENSATIONS GRANTED	None.

By: Alex King – Deputy Leader
Peter Sass - Head of Democratic Services

To: Cabinet – 25 February 2013

Subject: Decisions from Scrutiny Committee – 12 December 2012

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out the decisions from the Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Committee

1. Attached as Appendix 1 is a schedule that contains the decisions from the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 12 December 2012, together with the response of the relevant Cabinet Member. Please note that the decisions from the Budget Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21 January 2013 were reported to the 23 January Cabinet meeting.

Recommendation:

2. That the Cabinet agree responses to these decisions, which will be reported back to the Scrutiny Committee.

Contact: Peter Sass
peter.sass@kent.gov.uk
01622 694002

Background Information: *Nil*

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**Amalgamation of Walmer Science College and Castle Community College
Decision:- 12/01977
(12 December 2012)**

Cabinet portfolio: Mr M Whiting, Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills

Synopsis: The report set out the reasons for the call in of the Cabinet Member's decision to issue a Public Notice to close Walmer Science College with effect from 31 August 2013, conditional upon the Secretary of State's agreement to the enlargement of Castle Community College.

Recommendations and responses:

- (1) Thank Mr Whiting, Mr Leeson and Ms White for attending the meeting and answering Members questions**
- (2) Request that a webpage be developed containing all information relevant to the proposal to amalgamate Walmer Science College and Castle Community College. This would allow all interested parties to easily access the information in one place.**
- (3) Ask the Cabinet Member for assurance that the Walmer Science College buildings, which were a public asset, would be retained for future educational use.**
- (4) Does not require reconsideration of the decision.**

**Fastrack Phase 1 Major Scheme – Compulsory Purchase Order Claim by Darent Valley Hospital Trust, Dartford
(12 December 2012)**

OPEN REPORT ON EXEMPT DISCUSSION

Cabinet portfolio: Mr R Gough, Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform.

Synopsis: The report set out the concerns of the Chairman and Spokespeople around this urgent decision

Recommendations and responses:

- 1. Thank Mr Gough, Mr Austerberry, Mr Farmer and Ms Crease for attending the meeting and answering Members' questions**
- 2. Urge the Cabinet Member to pass all information relating to the Council's advisors appointment and conduct of the Compulsory Purchase Order claim to the Council's Legal Department to determine whether there was a case for pursuing the Advisors for compensation. In particular the letter dated 30/11/2010, which in the opinion of the Scrutiny Committee, and Counsel, substantially weakened the County Council's negotiating position.**
- 3. Ensure that in future when urgent decisions are to be taken that the full facts are provided in any documentation to Members.**
- 4. Ask that the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee (or Property Sub-Group whichever is deemed most appropriate) review the Compulsory Purchase Order procedure, including the negotiation and valuation process and also to examine value for money issues.**

Cabinet Member's Response:

The Cabinet Member has asked for the relevant documents, as proposed by the Scrutiny Committee, to be passed to the Council's Legal Department and this has been done.

Date of Response:

26.01.13

By:	Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education, Learning and Skills
To:	Cabinet - 25 th February 2013
Subject	14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy
Classification:	Unrestricted

:

Summary:	This report presents the final version of the draft 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy, following changes made as a result of the consultation with stakeholders and further amendments made as a result of consultation with Cabinet Members.
Recommendations:	To agree the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy for publication.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The draft 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy has been developed by KCC in conjunction with schools, FE colleges and other partners, and has been considered by the Education Cabinet Committee, Corporate Board and Cabinet between November and December 2012 along with findings from the consultation with stakeholders during October and November 2012.

2. Strategy Update

- 2.1 A draft of the Strategy was taken to an informal meeting of cabinet members on the 17th December 2012 together with findings from the stakeholder consultation. In addition to a number of suggested amendments to the Strategy, which have been incorporated, a key action from that meeting was to produce an executive summary of the Strategy. Both documents are attached as Appendix A and B for consideration. Appendix C details the revised list of targets and performance measures for the Strategy.

3. Summary of the Strategy

- 3.1 The ambition of the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy is for all young people in Kent to become better qualified and more employable; to be able to participate and achieve success in education and work based training at least until the age of 18; and to ensure more 18 to 24 year olds can access higher learning or sustained employment that is appropriate to their needs and relevant to the local and national economy.
- 3.2 Our ambition is also to improve the Kent economy by ensuring there is a better skilled workforce and employers are more engaged in the design and delivery of new training programmes and vocational qualifications for young people, including

a significant increase in apprenticeships. The strategy incorporates many of the recommendations of the KCC Select Committee Report, the Student Journey.

- 3.3 Key success indicators for this strategy will be more effective partnership working, through a new Kent Skills and Employment Partnership Board, that delivers lower youth unemployment, better systems for local employers and learning providers to work in partnership and the higher levels of skilled young people we need, with every young person being helped to participate in learning or training until the age of 18, with a good outcome.
- 3.4 Under the Raising the Participation Age (RPA) regulations the local authority has a responsibility to ensure all young people's education or training can be tracked until age 18. An agreed approach to doing this in Kent, in partnership with schools, colleges, employers and work based training providers is a priority for the 14-24 Strategy.
- 3.5 The strategy has four major priorities, to raise attainment; to improve and extend vocational education, training and apprenticeships; to increase participation and employment; and to target support to vulnerable young people so that they achieve better outcomes and employment.
- 3.6 The strategy is supported by the review of the Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Provision, which will result in improved support and educational programmes for young people at risk of exclusion, by September 2013. It is also aligned with the development of the Kent Integrated Adolescent Support Service, which will be rolled out across Kent in 2013.
- 3.7 The 14-24 Strategy is ambitious for major change in developing a better vocational training and skills system in Kent, which guarantees higher levels of qualification and employability that match the key employment sectors in the county. The targets we have set are challenging and their success will mean significant benefits for young people's employment and the Kent economy by 2016.

4. Communicating the Strategy

- 4.1 The launch of the Strategy will be accompanied by a comprehensive Communications Plan to ensure that the Strategy's aims and activities will be disseminated to stakeholders, including members of the public, schools and FE Colleges, work based learning providers, employers and other partners.
- 4.2 This will include designed versions of the Strategy and Executive Summary for the public (as above) and a series of press releases that will coincide with high profile events such as National Careers Week (4 – 8 March 2013), Kent Choices 4 U Live and National Apprenticeships Week (11 – 15 March 2013). These will highlight key messages illustrated through case studies and success stories from our partners that demonstrate the positive work already taking place in line with the Strategy.
- 4.3 Furthermore, KCC's apprenticeships website will have been refreshed and updated for the launch so that information is more accessible for young people and employers wanting to pursue apprenticeships.

5. Recommendations


Cabinet is requested to:

- a. Agree to adopt and publish the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy, as at appendix A
- b. Agree to adopt and publish the Executive Summary of the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy , as at Appendix B
- c. Agree to the outline communications plan for disseminating the Strategy, as at paragraphs 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 of the report.

6. Background Documents

- Appendix A: Draft 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy
- Appendix B: Executive Summary
- Appendix C: Revised list of targets for the Strategy
- Appendix D: Press release plan

7. Contact details

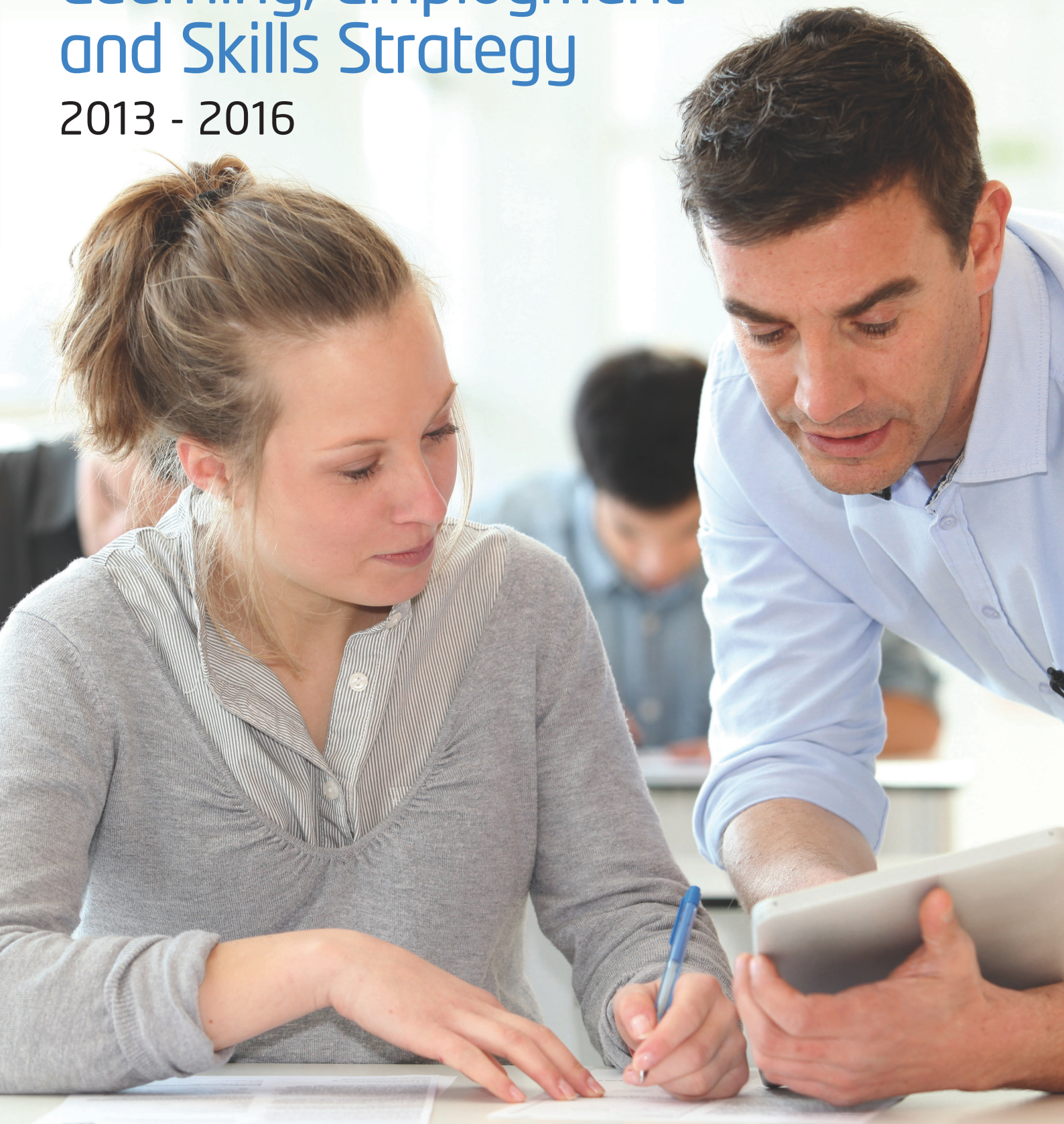
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Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy

2013 - 2016





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Summary

Our Ambition:

Our ambition is for all young people in Kent to become better qualified and more employable; to be able to participate and achieve success in education and work based training at least until the age of 18; and to ensure more 18 to 24 year olds can access higher learning or sustained employment that is appropriate to their needs and relevant to the local and national economy.

Our Aims:

We aim to achieve lower youth unemployment, put in place better systems for local employers and learning providers to work in partnership so that we secure the higher levels of skilled young people we need in the key growth sectors relevant to the Kent economy, and have every young person participating in high quality learning or training that is relevant to their needs, until the age of 18, with a good outcome.

About the Strategy:

This strategy is designed to link the world of learning to the world of work more successfully, and to bring about more rapid transformation in young people's skills, qualifications and employability. The strategy aims to set out the overarching ambitions and outcomes that we and our partners intend to achieve.

We have four key areas of focus for our strategy. These are:

- To raise attainment and skill levels
- To extend and improve vocational education, training and apprenticeships
- To increase participation and employment
- To target support to vulnerable young people

In order to succeed, we know we have to develop more effective partnership working between the local authority, schools, colleges, higher education providers, work- based learning providers, employers and other agencies. It is clear that greater collaboration is needed between groups of schools

and with local FE colleges and employers, and that local 14-19 partnerships need to do more to develop the curriculum offer, progression pathways and work based training opportunities for local young people.



Why do we need a strategy?

Recent reports from Government, the CBI and KCC's Select Committee Report, *the Student Journey*, confirm the poor track record in managing school to work transition, the need for radical overhaul and improvement in vocational education and training and the urgency of addressing employers' concerns about the work readiness and employability skills of many school and college leavers and graduates.

The majority of young people in Kent succeed in education and make a positive transition to higher learning and the world of work. However we are not succeeding well enough in engaging and educating all young people to a standard that ensures their future economic well being or meets the needs of the economy. This is a great waste of human potential which no developed country can afford if we are to compete in a global market. We need to do better in Kent, in how we educate adolescents and young adults to be more highly skilled and work ready.

Who will the strategy impact upon?

To influence:

- Young people making choices
- Parents and carers
- Employers
- Education and training providers
- Commissioners

All young people aged 14-24, but in particular:

- Young people who would not currently chose to stay on in education and training to age 18
- Young people who would benefit from vocational pathways
- Vulnerable learners, such as care leavers, teenage parents, young offenders and young people with learning difficulties who are consistently over represented in NEET figures.
- Those pursuing higher education courses and graduates

To engage:

- Schools, FE Colleges and Higher Education and their representative bodies
- Specialist providers
- Employers and employer networks
- Statutory partners
- Funding bodies
- Sector Skills Councils
- Young people and their parents/carers

How will the strategy be delivered and monitored?

We will develop a new Employment, Learning and Skills Partnership Board that will take on joint responsibility for the delivery and oversight of this strategy. It can only be delivered through effective partnership between all the agencies and key stakeholders.

Conclusion:

The initiatives and the strategic priorities set out in this document represent one of Kent County Council's major goals; to change the life chances and employment prospects of young people and in turn the future prosperity and growth of Kent as one of the best places to live in the UK.



Introduction

Our strategy is designed to achieve a fundamental shift in the education system in Kent, towards a more comprehensive vocational offer for young people aged 14 to 24 and to make the changes needed to build a learning and skills system fit for the 21st century.

This means more rapid development in Kent whereby the work of schools, colleges and employers become better integrated and responsive to the needs of young people and the economy, and young people have access to the highest quality and levels of vocational education in the UK¹.

It aims to deliver the commitment made in Bold Steps for Kent to *“work with all providers to deliver a 14-24 strategy that equips young people with the academic, vocational and employability skills required to succeed in the 21st century economy”*

Young people are the future for Kent and raising their educational achievement and aspirations is directly linked to their future prosperity, the prosperity of the community and the success of the local economy. Against the backdrop of low UK economic growth and high youth unemployment, there is urgent need in Kent to do more to support all young people to achieve better educational outcomes and be better prepared for skilled employment or further learning at age 18 and beyond.

This is a massive agenda that requires fundamental changes to the way we deliver education and skills training, so that the system becomes much more adaptive to our rapidly changing world. Improving the employability of young people and the transition from school to work is a crucial task if we want to contribute to the country’s economic recovery as well as ensure the young people of Kent have the best possible prospects.

The education system is being challenged like never before to equip all young people with the qualifications, skills and experiences that will enable them to succeed in work and life. The gaps between what we are achieving and what our society needs are widening, as is the mismatch between the skills

required by a rapidly changing world of work and many of the vocational courses and qualifications provided by schools and colleges. The economic downturn has sharpened our perception of the underlying trends and structural changes that need to be made to improve our prosperity, and the growth and international competitiveness of the UK economy. Education plays a vital part in this.

Recent reports from Government, the CBI and KCC’s Select Committee Report, *the Student Journey*, confirm the poor track record in managing school to work transition, the need for radical overhaul and improvement in vocational education and training and the urgency of addressing employers’ concerns about the work readiness and employability skills of many school and college leavers and graduates.

We are enormously challenged, still, to ensure all young people achieve the levels of literacy, numeracy and IT competence required for a skilled job in the modern economy. We are also challenged to develop the range and diversity of vocational courses required to ensure all young people’s aptitudes and interests are developed for their future sustained employment in a world of work that is innovating fast. The highest status university courses are vocationally focused and yet school and college level vocational courses are often considered to have lower status and limited value in our system. At the same time, well established apprenticeship programmes run by some companies are highly prized with very competitive entry requirements, but we do not have enough of them. The demand for apprenticeships is rising rapidly but the capacity of businesses to provide them is lagging behind. Many employers and schools recognise the need to work more closely but we still have a situation where many young people do not have sufficient opportunity to learn about and experience the world of work as part of their on-going education². And like many developed countries we have a high rate of school failure among some groups of young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, which leads to unacceptably high levels of unemployment and social cost. These are some of the challenges this strategy is designed to tackle in Kent.

¹ Action for Jobs: How to get the UK Working, CBI, October 2011

² Learning to Grow: What employers need from education and skills survey 2012, CBI/Pearson, June 2012

We are building on some good developments in recent years, which highlight some of the key ingredients for future success. The Kent Vocational programme was established in 2005 to provide high quality practical pathways for young people at age 14 in a range of occupations. These provided a blend of school and work based practical skills training, delivered by skilled experts in different occupations, in environments with high quality industrial standard equipment. There was good employer engagement in the design of the curriculum and in providing mentoring and guidance for young people. In total 29 vocational centres and specialist workshops were established and by 2010 there were over 8000 young people engaged in these programmes offering a wide range of work related qualifications. The vocational programme continues to deliver a range of worthwhile vocational options for 14 to 16 year olds one day a week, complemented by a core curriculum designed to provide young people with the qualifications they need at age 16.

The practical, experiential and work based elements of these programmes are some of the reasons for their success in engaging young people and improving their skills. In particular the Young Apprenticeship programme was a significant success, with a 98% success rate which included level 2 English and mathematics. A number of the vocational programmes made a significant contribution to the reduction of the NEET figure, which was well below the national average for a number of years but is now increasing. The one day a week model in high quality provision put Kent at the forefront of innovative delivery of vocational programmes for 14-16 year olds nationally and was praised by the Wolf Report.

However the Wolf Report concluded that the current system of vocational education nationally is failing too many young people, for a number of different reasons, including:

- Young people taking courses and qualifications which have been designed to meet the needs of adults, already in employment, seeking to hone the skills they use every day – but which offer no route to further education or entry to employment for those still in education.

- Perverse incentives, created by the performance and funding systems, encouraging the teaching of qualifications which attract the most performance points, or the most funding – not the qualification that will support young people to progress.
- Students without a solid grounding in the basics being allowed to drop the study of English and maths – the most vital foundations for employment - when these are precisely the subjects that they most need to continue.
- Not enough Apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds and a lack of incentives for employers to be involved in the programme.
- And underlying these problems, an attitude that vocational education is a second choice, easy option for the less able, which has been reinforced, not tackled, by claims of “equivalence” between qualifications which no one has truly believed.

As its response to the Wolf Report, the government’s response is to:

- Ensure that all young people study and achieve in English and mathematics, ideally to GCSE A*-C, by the age of 19. For those young people who are not immediately able to achieve these qualifications, we will identify high quality English and maths qualifications that will enable them to progress to GCSE later. We will also reform GCSE to ensure that they are a more reliable indicator of achievement in the basics, in particular by ensuring that GCSEs are reformed alongside the current review of the National Curriculum.
- Reform performance tables and funding rules to remove the perverse incentives which have served to devalue vocational education, while pushing young people into qualification routes that do not allow them to move into work or further learning. Those vocational qualifications that attract performance points will be the very best for young people – in terms of their content, assessment and progression.
- Look at the experience of other countries to simplify Apprenticeships, remove bureaucracy and make them easier for employers to offer.

Mirroring the national position, in Kent we have identified specific shortcomings which we need to address as we move forward. The lack of clear progression and extension to post 16 learning and higher level vocational qualifications; the mismatch between some of the courses and the needs of local businesses; the limited attention to level 2 literacy and numeracy qualifications in some programmes; and the lack of flexibility in working arrangements between schools and other providers are all priorities for improvement as part of this strategy.

These, and the need to scale up to a much more comprehensive system of vocational education that supports all young people to at least age 18 and beyond, and offers higher level qualifications with better routes to skilled employment for all young adults in Kent, are the main focus of this strategy.

Patrick Leeson
Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills



Ambition for the Education and Training of 14-24 Year Olds in Kent

Our ambition is for all young people in Kent to become better qualified and more employable; to be able to participate and achieve success in education and work based training at least until the age of 18; and to ensure more 18 to 24 year olds can access higher learning or sustained employment that is appropriate to their needs and relevant to the local and national economy.

Our commitment is to seek to inspire young people in Kent to fulfil their potential in the community and in the world of work and to equip them with the academic, vocational and life skills required to succeed. We will work with partners to ensure that young people are able to access the information and gain the qualifications, skills, work experience and learning opportunities they need.

The majority of young people in Kent succeed in education and make a positive transition to higher learning and the world of work. However we are not succeeding well enough in engaging and educating all young people to a standard that ensures their future economic well being or meets the needs of the economy. While we educate 60% of 16 year olds to a good standard and over 40% of young people engage in higher education, the system lets down nearly 30% of young people whose skills and qualifications limit their prospects to low paid and low skilled employment and high risk of unemployment.

This is a great waste of human potential which no developed country can afford if we are to compete in a global market. It is only through an improvement in our skills base that Kent's young people will be able to compete globally with the fastest growing nations. Introducing the OECD Skills Strategy in May 2012, the OECD Secretary General said that skills have become the Global currency of 21st century economies. Other countries are developing faster and achieving

growth through improved education and learning, by adapting their education systems more quickly to the needs of a dynamic work environment and digital age and by integrating more successfully their business, school and university systems with advances in key skills sectors. Our young people are not just competing against each other for jobs anymore, they are competing in a global economy. We need to foster in young people flexibility, practicality and self-reliance and ensure that their education enables them to be able to do things as well as know things.

We need to do better in Kent, in how we educate adolescents and young adults to be more highly skilled and work ready. This strategy is designed to link the world of learning to the world of work; bring about more rapid transformation in young people's skills, qualifications and employability. It also sets out the overarching ambitions and outcomes that we intend to achieve with our partners. The strategy will be underpinned by a series of policies and plans that will set out in more detail how we intend jointly, with our key stakeholders and partners, to deliver these ambitions.

The successful engagement of employers and more effective partnership arrangements are paramount. Kent has a large number of employer networks and groups. We are also developing new forms of school collaborative arrangements and have established the Kent Association of Headteachers as the main partnership forum for shaping the future of education in Kent. In addition, we are a key partner in the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) that includes councils, businesses, universities and colleges from Essex and East Sussex, all focused on driving forward prosperity by creating the right environment for growth. It is recognised that access to a world class, appropriately skilled workforce is the top factor in influencing business location and company performance, and therefore a key aspect of the LEP agenda is to ensure that businesses have the skilled workforces needed to compete, particularly in the key growth sectors that will drive economic growth for the future. We need to build on this potential to improve engagement and collaborative working and to share information, seek feedback on new initiatives and gain commitment for business to increase

contacts with schools and colleges, develop work based learning and work experience opportunities for young people and be more involved in the design of vocational programmes.

In order to succeed, we know we have to develop more effective partnership working between the local authority, schools, colleges, higher education providers, work- based learning providers, employers and other agencies. It is clear that greater collaboration is needed between groups of schools and with local FE colleges and employers, and that local 14-19 partnerships need to do more to develop the curriculum offer, progression pathways and work based training opportunities for local young people.

The ambitions of this 14-24 Strategy must therefore be delivered in partnership with a wide variety of organisations and stakeholders, including:

Schools	Young People
FE Colleges	Employers
HE institutions	Employer Networks
Training providers	District Councils
Education Funding Agency	Sector Skills Councils
Skills Funding Agency (National Apprenticeship Service)	Diocesan Boards
Job Centre Plus	Unions

We will develop a new Employment, Learning and Skills Partnership Board that will take on joint responsibility for the delivery and oversight of this strategy.

We aim to achieve lower youth unemployment, put in place better systems for local employers and learning providers to work in partnership so that we secure the higher levels of skilled young people we need in the key growth sectors relevant to the Kent economy, and have every young person participating in high quality learning or training that is relevant to their needs, until the age of 18, with a good outcome.

Achieving our ambition will be challenging when nearly 10,000 18-24 year olds in Kent are currently unemployed, there are wide gaps in secondary school performance at age 16, about 12% of 16-19 year olds do not participate in education or work

based training and by the age of 19 over 20% of young people still do not have the basic qualifications to get a skilled job.

In order to these challenges we have four key areas of focus for our strategy:

1. Raise Attainment

This strategy will focus as a priority on developing the vocational curriculum and raising the achievement of 14 to 16 year olds, so that all young people can progress to meaningful qualification pathways to age 18. Attainment at 16 is the single most important factor in securing participation, learning and achievement between the ages of 16 and 19, especially attainment in English and mathematics. We need therefore to continue to raise the attainment of five good GCSEs including English and mathematics at age 16, and when this is not achieved at age 16 to ensure young people can attain this standard by age 17 or 18.

Most young people want to stay in education after the age of 16 to improve their levels of qualifications and most of those who follow an A level pathway do well and are well provided for in schools and colleges. However other post 16 learners are not so well provided for and do less well, so another priority is to improve the curriculum offer and the progress and educational outcomes for all 16-19 year olds, especially those from low income backgrounds who achieve well below average in Kent.

For the young people who follow a Level 3 qualification or Advanced level pathway we need to see an improvement in outcomes. Kent achieves below the national average on all measures and we need to be more ambitious for all young people, especially those who can and should progress to graduate level. We need more graduates in Kent and to retain more graduate employees in Kent businesses. Attainment at grades A and B at Advanced level is very variable, even in schools where prior attainment at age 16 would predict very good level 3 outcomes. This should continue to be a focus for improvement in school sixth forms and colleges as part of this strategy.

2. Improve and Extend Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships

The second key strand of the strategy is to ensure there is a quality vocational education and training offer in place so that all 14-19 year olds can access and succeed in following an appropriate pathway for education or employment with training. This means a much more comprehensive and systematic programme of vocational education, 14-19, across the county that is well matched to students' needs, has clear progression to higher levels of qualification and has employer engagement in the design of the programmes and employer contribution to their suitability for the local labour market. It will include a significant increase in young people taking up and successfully completing an apprenticeship, as well as more young people following other vocational pathways that lead to higher level qualifications and a skilled job.

Kent's business community, employers, FE colleges and work based learning providers are the key to this ambition. Learners on full and part-time vocational courses need to develop new employment skills, and progress to the next level of learning, whilst receiving relevant and high quality work experience throughout their period of study.

3. Increase Participation and Employment:

The third key strand is to achieve full participation to age 18 for all young people. The Education and Skills Act 2008, places a duty on all young people to participate in education or training until age 18 by 2015. This doesn't necessarily mean staying in school. Young people will be able to choose how they participate, through full-time education, such as school or college; an apprenticeship; part-time education or training if they are employed, or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week.

Tracking progress

Under the Raising the Participation Age (RPA) regulations the local authority has a responsibility to ensure all young people's education or training can be tracked until age 18. We recognise that effective

tracking and monitoring begins much earlier as young people approach the age of 14 and make decisions about their future pathways. An agreed approach to doing this in Kent, in partnership with schools, colleges, employers and work based training providers is a priority.

National Education Destination Measures were published for the first time on 17 July 2012, by institution. The measures show the percentage of students continuing their education in school, further education or sixth-form college or higher education institution, and the percentage training through an apprenticeship or work-based learning. From Spring 2013 more complex employment destinations will also be published. This data will be key for helping KCC and partners determine the trends in progression at 16 and 18, and the identification of issues and gaps.

Preparing for employment and self-employment

We recognise that all young people need to be educated to develop their employability skills and that employers' surveys identify the lack of these essential skills by many young people as a major concern. Communication, problem solving, initiative, team work, time keeping, resilience and literacy and numeracy skills are as essential for employability as qualification levels and vocational specific skills.

Approximately 76% of Kent businesses contain 1-4 employees. Self-employment and business start-ups are a destination for young people, although they probably will not be the first career choice after leaving full-time education. Young people must have access to advice and guidance about the possibilities of self-employment, along with opportunities to develop their enterprise and entrepreneurship skills.

Volunteering is a way of developing skills and gaining experience relevant to work. Student volunteers are welcomed particularly for their youth, enthusiasm, creativity, and dynamism, both in community settings and within business internships. There are a plethora of volunteering opportunities but a lack of co-ordination and information available, particularly for young people who have left full-time study.³ The strategy must ensure a managed approach to providing information for young people who want to

³ "Bursting the bubble: Students and Volunteering" Institute of Volunteering Research 2010.

undertake voluntary posts and co-ordinating these opportunities.

A priority for the strategy is to ensure employability, entrepreneurship and enterprise skills are taught effectively as part of the curriculum from Primary school onwards. Building on this, a priority is also to ensure young people access quality work experience as they progress through their 14 -19 education and that there is greater employer engagement in the design and delivery of curriculum courses and work based learning. Quality work experience placements, volunteering opportunities and internships are the most effective routes into apprenticeships, employment with training and self-employment.

Needs of the local economy

It is clear that our strategy, to be effective, must focus on the local economy and the needs of the key skills sectors in Kent, as well as ensure the education and training offer for young people is well integrated with employers' plans and needs in different areas of the county. We aim to achieve improved employer engagement in how young people are educated and prepared for employment, so that the education and skills system in Kent is more responsive to the changing needs of local business and workforce requirements, and more young people are helped into jobs.

The priority will be to realign the post 16 offer to better reflect the needs of the local economy. We need to develop curriculum pathways and qualification routes, as well as sustained work experience and training for young people, which are better matched with the requirements of key skills sectors in Kent. A key part of this will be to make effective use of all the available local and national schemes that are designed to increase youth employment with training, including apprenticeships.

Progressing to higher education

Where students are achieving high grades at Advanced level and want to progress to higher education, we need to ensure that they are optimising their choice of course and institution, to maximise their employment opportunities within their chosen vocational pathway. We know

from research carried out by the Sutton Trust that applications to the UK's top universities vary widely by similar types of school and colleges. Kent learners are not always being given consistent messages about university choices and future earning and employment prospects.

We will work with local Higher Education providers to develop vocational pathways and ensure relevant work experience opportunities are available locally. In future we aim to follow the progress of Kent learners across HE institutions to measure their course choices against employment outcomes and feedback this analysis into local advice and guidance for young people.

We aim to ensure that more young people can progress from Advanced and Higher level apprenticeships to higher education and that more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds go to university or progress to graduate level apprenticeships.

Transition from learning to work

The strategy will also focus on supporting young people to age 24 into employment. The successful transition from learning into work continues to be a key issue for young people well into early adulthood, and depends very much on the skills and qualifications they have achieved since age 16. Better qualified young people have lower unemployment, but it is also the case that many better qualified young people are unemployed because their skills do not match the needs of the local economy and the local economy is contracting rather than growing. Nationally over 1 million 18-24 year olds are unemployed (10,000 in Kent) but many local employers and small businesses say one of the reasons for not expanding is the lack of appropriately skilled workers, especially among young people. To address this and encourage employers to invest in skills and more sustainable workforce development for growth, this strategy will give priority to developing further our partnerships between business, schools, higher and further education.

We will also work with all partners and agencies to ensure as many unemployed 18-24 year olds as possible benefit from schemes like the Youth

Contract, which is support worth nearly £1 billion over the next three years. It includes extra support through Jobcentre Plus offering young people additional adviser intervention, access to a careers interview with the National Careers Service, an offer of a work experience or sector-based work academy place, and entry into the Work Programme which provides a subsidised job with wage incentives for employers to take on young people.

4 Target Support to Vulnerable Young People

The fourth key strand is to target support more effectively to young people who are at greatest risk of poor outcomes and future unemployment. The strategy recognises that many young people face challenges in their lives and need additional support. The number of young people not in education, employment or training is rising and there is over representation in this group of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people who are looked after by the local authority, care leavers, adopted young people, young offenders, young parents and refugees and asylum seekers. Too many young people in Kent are excluded permanently from school and remain outside the mainstream education system, with poorer prospects for achievement as a result.

Additionally, there is insufficient provision for 16-19 year olds with learning difficulties and disabilities to help them access further learning and achieve independent living and employment. We are taking steps to improve the provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Nearly half of the 16 year olds who attend Special Schools do not have access to appropriate post 16 education, work based learning and training and many young people with learning difficulties and disabilities at age 19 have poor opportunities for employment and independent living. We are addressing these issues as part of our SEN and Disability strategy and through the new arrangements for joint planning of the future care and education of disabled 16-25 year olds.

We will, therefore, give particular attention to

- reducing exclusions and the NEET figures for vulnerable groups

- improving participation, provision and outcomes for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, including providing better integrated support through working with colleagues and partners such as KCC's Families and Social Care and the Learning Disability Partnership Board to facilitate transition arrangements as they move towards adult life.
- developing integrated adolescent support services that will provide targeted help for vulnerable young people and those at risk of poorer outcomes and future unemployment.

It is also clear that more intensive work is needed in some parts of Kent where youth unemployment is well above average, there are high numbers of NEETS and attainment outcomes at ages 16 and 19 are below average. The strategy will pilot more integrated working to support young people in at least four of these areas of high need in 2012-2013.

Our Strategic Priorities

The key priorities for the 14-24 Learning and Skills Strategy are to:

Raise Attainment by:

- Ensuring more young people achieve five good GCSEs including English and mathematics at age 16 and 19, and we close the gap so that more 16 to 19 year olds achieve level 2 and Level 3 qualifications especially those from low income backgrounds
- Ensuring more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds go to university and more young people can progress from advanced level and higher apprenticeships to higher education
- Ensuring more young people who follow an A level pathway complete their courses and achieve better grades, so that they can access higher level apprenticeships and professional pathways, move to higher education of their choice so that we widen participation in higher education, and for those young people with the best grades that more should secure a place at the top universities

Improve and Extend Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships by:

- Ensuring the 14-16 curriculum provides vocational options for young people that lead to higher qualifications and better progression to post 16 vocational learning and training
- Increasing the take up and completion of apprenticeships, and ensure there is better progression to higher level apprenticeships for all 16-24 year olds
- Expanding other vocational options that lead more directly to employment in the Kent economy

Increase Participation and Employment by:

- Ensuring all young people participate in learning and training to age 17 by 2013 and to age 18 by 2015, commencing with pilots in Tonbridge, Swale, Thanet and Dover during 2012-13.
- Developing curriculum pathways and progression for 16-19 year olds so that those who do not follow an A level pathway have high quality options that deliver a good outcome and access to skilled employment
- Developing young people's employability skills as an essential part of the curriculum
- Improving access to high quality information and advice, and work experience, so that young people have a better understanding of the labour market and FE options
- Ensuring new courses and pathways 14-19 are more responsive to the needs of local skills sectors and are better integrated with the needs of the local economy, as well as being supported by local employers' investment and engagement.
- Promoting the new Kent 16+ Travel Card to learners and providers in Kent to minimise travel being a barrier to learning.
- Developing an effective system of local 14-19 learning and employment partnerships that engage schools, colleges, work based learning providers, employers and Jobcentre plus in delivering planned coordinated improvements in young people's skills, qualifications and employability.

- Delivering increased youth employment through support for apprenticeships, internships, work placements, re-training opportunities, targeted work with those out of work for more than six months and engagement with employers and other agencies to promote wage and training incentives.
- Developing employer engagement in education, more opportunities for young people to have contact with, and careers advice from employers.
- Preparing 19-24 year olds for a lifetime of learning in order to enhance their employment prospects, earnings potential, wellbeing and personal development.

Target Support to Vulnerable Young People by:

- Ensuring disadvantaged young people get good quality work experience and more support for progression towards further education and work, so that achievement gaps narrow and unemployment for this group is not disproportionately higher
- Improving early intervention, support and pathway planning for young people most at risk of becoming NEET so that we rapidly reduce the NEET figures
- Developing an integrated adolescent support programme so that all young people at risk of poorer outcomes have tailored support to improve their well being, to participate in learning, training and other positive activities and are helped to access employment
- Improving 16-24 learning and employment opportunities, and outcomes, for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. This will include access to work experience opportunities, vocational learning and preparation for the world of work, especially providing additional support for those who cannot access mainstream schools and colleges.
- Developing effective tracking and monitoring of all young people from the earliest years of secondary school and more particularly from age 16, so that all young people's needs can be addressed and they are supported to participate and succeed to age 18

- Developing more intensive and integrated programmes of support and provision, in the areas of Kent with the poorest outcomes and prospects for 14-24 year olds.
- Completing the review of Pupil Referral Units so that each local area has a more flexible and integrated approach to supporting the learning and achievement of young people at risk of exclusion from school and those following alternative curriculum provision.

The National Context

The national developments and reforms of vocational education and skills training pathways require a coordinated local response and one important purpose of this Strategy is to provide this coordination, to maximise the benefits, opportunities and resources available as a result of national initiatives, so that young people in Kent gain as much as possible.

Our strategy addresses national policy developments which set out the requirement to raise attainment, close achievement gaps, develop vocational education, increase apprenticeships, improve youth employment and employer engagement, secure participation for all young people in education and training to age 18 by 2015 and target support to disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.⁴ We will make optimum use of the reforms to support and drive forward our strategy in Kent.

The recent changes to the school performance framework at age 16, reformed vocational qualifications and Study Programmes for 16 to 19 year olds, which will be accompanied by far reaching changes in the way post-16 education is funded, monitored and reported, we believe provide an opportunity for more creative curriculum design and better learning pathways. It is helpful that from 2012 the government is publishing destination measures showing how many young people at age 16 progress into education, training or employment from individual schools and colleges.

From September 2012 schools have responsibility for providing impartial careers advice and guidance for all pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 and the government will consult on extending this duty for all 16-18 year olds. This is an opportunity for schools to ensure young people receive better advice and guidance about their future learning and employment options.

The proposals in the Children and Families Bill also require young people with learning difficulties and disabilities to participate to age 18 and to have integrated education, health and care plans to support them to age 25. This will help to ensure better provision is in place for these young people, coordinated more effectively across health, social care and education services.

The Youth Contract is designed to support disengaged 16-18 year olds to participate in education, work experience or a job with training. Those unemployed who are supported through the Youth Contract will face the possible penalty of losing benefits if they do not participate or if they drop out of a work placement or subsidised job⁵. We will ensure we make maximum use of this to support as many unemployed young people as possible to get into work.

Recent evidence suggests that young people who participate are likely to have had good contact with employers while at school and a new Education and Employers Task Force aims to provide people from all sectors and professions to visit schools to talk about their jobs and career routes. We will work with schools to encourage a significant increase in employer engagement and contact with school pupils.

The CBI is making it a priority to support businesses and schools to team up to raise ambition at all levels and to take the essential steps needed to build a schools system fit for the 21st century. The Ambition for All Campaign will identify what works well in terms of preparing young people for life and work. The campaign wants to determine what should be done to ensure that all young people are leaving school with the skills needed for employment and life.

⁴ The Plan for Growth, HM Treasury/BIS, March 2011

⁵ Building Engagement, Building Futures: 16 to 24 year olds in Education, Training and Work, DFE/BIS/DWP, December 2011

The proposals include:

- support for a national roll-out of successful existing school-business engagement initiatives with a new 'Employability School' standard
- a network of 450 local business people (Business Ambassadors) to act as champions to enthuse and inspire young people about the world of work from an early age, through the development of school business links in each local area
- increasing business commitment to providing high quality meaningful work experience

The government is targeting more investment on apprenticeships and has developed a new 16-19 bursaries fund to provide additional support to low income learners for the cost of transport, food and learning materials. In 2012-13 the government is providing more funding for apprenticeships and expects to see over 140,000 more 16-18 year olds start an apprenticeship, with £1500 incentive payments to small businesses to take on an apprentice. Taking advantage of these initiatives is one of our key priorities.

Apprenticeships are not appropriate for everyone and so other pathways are also being promoted, based on new 16-19 vocational programmes of study offered by schools, FE colleges and other work based learning providers. These will have significant elements of work experience and there will be incentives for schools and colleges to develop more coherent packages that suit the needs of students who might otherwise disengage. We will ensure as much local flexibility and innovation as needed to support young people in different parts of Kent in new pre-apprenticeship programmes and the new vocational programmes of study.

The National Performance profile

Nationally, the performance challenges mirror those in Kent. (See appendix 1). There is a persistent link between disadvantage and low educational attainment and participation, which continues to blight life chances into adulthood. Pupils eligible for free school meals achieve half as well at age 16 compared to their peers, are more than twice as likely to become NEET, and are four times more likely to drop out of education or training before the age

of 19. About 75% of young people unemployed for more than six months have qualifications below level 2 and come from lower income backgrounds.

Gaps in attainment open up in the early years and widen as children get older. It also becomes obvious early on which children have most challenges and barriers to learning and achievement. Young people from families with multiple problems are most at risk of not participating and this is often the result of many years of failed interventions. All this points to the need for more effective early intervention and better targeted support to those children and young people who need it most to succeed.

Nationally in 2012 about 20% of 11 year olds progressed to secondary school with attainment levels below level 4 in English and mathematics. At GCSE, 59% of pupils attained five good GCSEs including English and mathematics. This reflects the Kent profile. Raising attainment in English and mathematics is critical, therefore, for all age groups in Primary and Secondary schools but most critically at age 16 and subsequently for 16 and 17 year olds. Where 18-24 year olds do not have a level 2 English and mathematics qualification, providing this opportunity for them is critical to improving their employment prospects.

The employment rate of adults with level 2 qualifications is twice that of those without qualifications and achieving level 2 and 3 qualifications dramatically increases lifetime earnings.

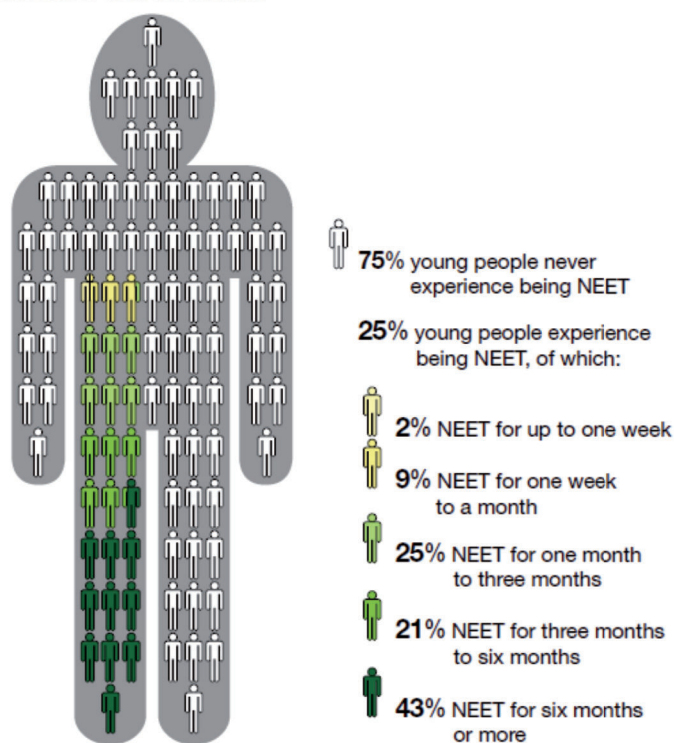
Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training - NEETs

Nationally more than 96% of 16 year olds and 87% of 17 year olds participate in education or work based learning. (In Kent these percentages are lower). There are over one million 16-18 year olds who are NEET and over one million young people aged 18-24 unemployed. There is also an increasing number of young people in the population. Most young people who are NEET or unemployed remain so for short periods of time and it is a smaller group that requires the most intensive targeted support. Among OECD countries, the UK has the eighth highest percentage of 16-19 year olds who are NEET.

Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment is of particular concern because of its impact in the longer term on lifetime earning and employment. Research based on longitudinal tracking of two UK cohorts from birth suggests that a year of youth unemployment (16 to 24) reduces earnings 10 years later by approximately 6% and by up to 15% by age 42. It also suggests that these young people spend an extra month unemployed every year up to their mid 30s. These effects diminish slowly in adult life but the studies suggest that 1 in 5 of these adults are still impacted by low wages and higher risk of unemployment into middle age.⁶

Figure 1: Most young people are never NEET: most NEET episodes last fewer than six months



Source: Audit Commission, analysis of Connexions data from fieldwork areas (approximately 24,000 young people), 2010

In a recent report, the TUC warned that young people leaving school, college or university are facing the bleakest employment outlook since 1994. Figures show one in five young people (20.4 %) are neither working nor studying full-time. The proportion of young people not in employment, education or training is at its highest level since 1994. This is despite the fact that the number of young people in education has been on a steady upwards trajectory over the last two decades. 41% of young people are now in full-time education, compared to just 24% in 1992. Young men currently have a higher chance of being in either work or education than young women, with 80.6 % studying or in work, compared to 78.5% of young women.

National priorities, therefore, are to reduce youth unemployment and the NEET population, improve attainment at ages 16 and 19 especially in English and mathematics, develop more quality vocational education leading to higher levels of skill and qualification that are valued in the world of work, increase apprenticeships and employer engagement, ensure young people receive impartial careers guidance and advice, improve progression pathways to post 16 education and training and support more vulnerable young people to achieve. These are reflected in this strategy.

⁶ Research undertaken for ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment: Youth Unemployment: the crisis we cannot afford.

Chart 2



Kent Initiatives for Skills and Employment

As well as the strategic priorities set out above, KCC has a number of on-going initiatives that will help us to move forward quickly. We want to build on these and extend their impact.

Our strategy builds on the previous 14-19 Learner Strategy, developed and implemented with our key stakeholders, as well as the considerable progress made in developing a strong vocational programme across Kent, the expansion of our apprenticeship programme, the improvements in access, information and choices and the work we have undertaken with businesses to identify our sector skills gaps.

The Vocational Programme

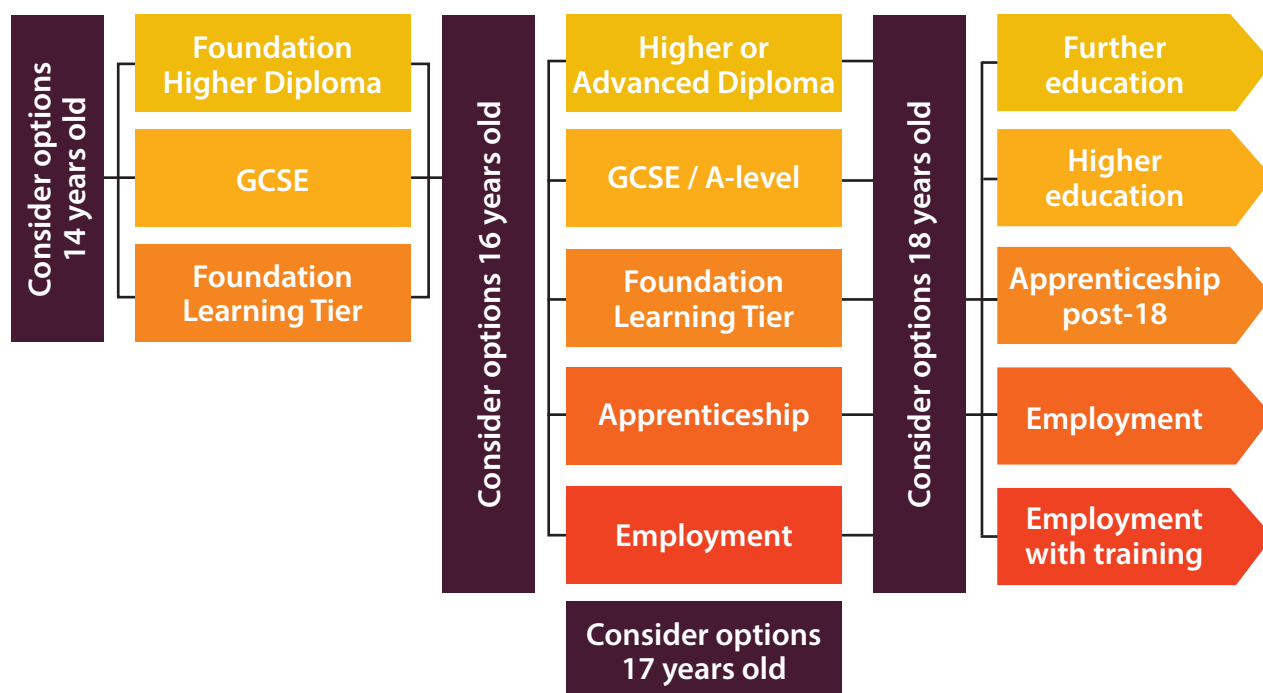
In response to the concerns about the number of young people who were not participating in learning and attaining sufficiently to progress to further education, training or employment, Kent County Council has given priority to developing a system of vocational learning that recognises the different aspirations of young people.

In the recent past we delivered a good 14-16 vocational programme, and the work of schools, colleges and the Vocational Skills Centres across Kent enabled 8,500 14-16 year olds to undertake vocational courses, helping many young people to move into an apprenticeship or other employment. The most successful courses were in construction, engineering and catering where industry standard facilities were available. We aim to build on this work, scale it up and ensure it leads to better qualifications and progression to post 16 courses.

In some cases, the 14-16 vocational courses did not offer good enough progression to post 16 courses offered in the FE Colleges and were a significant barrier to progression to Level 3 qualifications. We are aware that, to improve this, more effective 14-19 collaborative working and planning of local provision, which ensures progression from age 14 to 19 and leads to employment, needs to be developed between schools and colleges in each area of the county.

We also know that we need to re-design the vocational offer quickly in response to the recent government changes to vocational qualifications, and

Figure 3: Choices in education and training from age 14 to 19.



the expectation that young people will have a better vocational offer with good pathways to meaningful learning and qualifications between the ages of 16 and 24.

The Post 16 Travel Pass

We recognise that the cost of transport is a key consideration for young people when making decisions about participating in learning and training post-16. To ensure transport costs are not a barrier to learning and participation for all young people, and disadvantaged young people in particular, KCC has recently approved a subsidised Post-16 Travel Pass scheme. This provides county wide travel on buses and is available to learning providers at a cost of £520 per pass. There is an average KCC subsidy of £230 per pass. Students can apply to buy their pass from their learning provider at a cost of no more than £520, and at a reduced subsidised cost for low income families.

“Kentchoices”

We know that quality information and advice is the key to helping young people find the right courses and pathways for post-16 learning and training. When young people do not follow the most appropriate courses the drop-out rates at age 17 tend to be higher.

The ‘Kentchoices’ prospectus is the largest and most used area- wide online prospectus in the country with over 10,000 courses and 250 learning providers for post 16 learning opportunities. In 2011-12 over 13,000 Year 11 students used the site to research and apply for their courses. This year usage is considerably ahead of the same time last year and is expanding to include other year groups and young people from outside the county.

We will expand and develop the site further as part of this strategy. The site contains a comprehensive offer for 16 year olds including schools, colleges and work based learning providers. Use of the careers information pages has grown and so the site has evolved to include details on apprenticeships and a wider range of vocational opportunities as well as sections for professionals and parents. New developments include working with national and

local employers to represent their job opportunities for school leavers. The service is being developed to provide high quality information and support for employment. The service also offers support for schools to deliver their new responsibility to provide impartial careers advice and guidance.

Tackling Youth Unemployment

We are taking very active steps to tackle unemployment among young people, which is a real concern. Nearly 10,000 18-24 year olds in Kent are unemployed, and more than half have been out of work for more than three months. Youth unemployment in Kent has grown from 3,815 in January 2008 to its current high level.

Kent has five of the national youth employment hotspots where youth unemployment among 18-24 year olds exceeds 20%. These are in Thanet, Swale, Shepway, Gravesham and Dover. We believe this requires a more targeted and intensive response as part of this strategy. We will develop Youth Employment and Learning Zones in these areas where we will work with partners to pool resources to improve learning and training options to get young people into work, provide mentoring and more personalised support for young people aged 16 to 24, and provide better information about and contacts with, local employers and employment opportunities.

We are working across all parts of Kent to develop programmes that will create employment opportunities for 18 to 24 year olds who are currently in receipt of Job Seeker Allowance, building on our successful experience in delivering additional jobs for this group of young people through the Future Jobs Fund. We will continue to work with training providers to align our programmes with the National Youth Programme funding and other funding opportunities in order to direct as much resource available within the system to create employment opportunities for Kent young people.

Apprenticeships

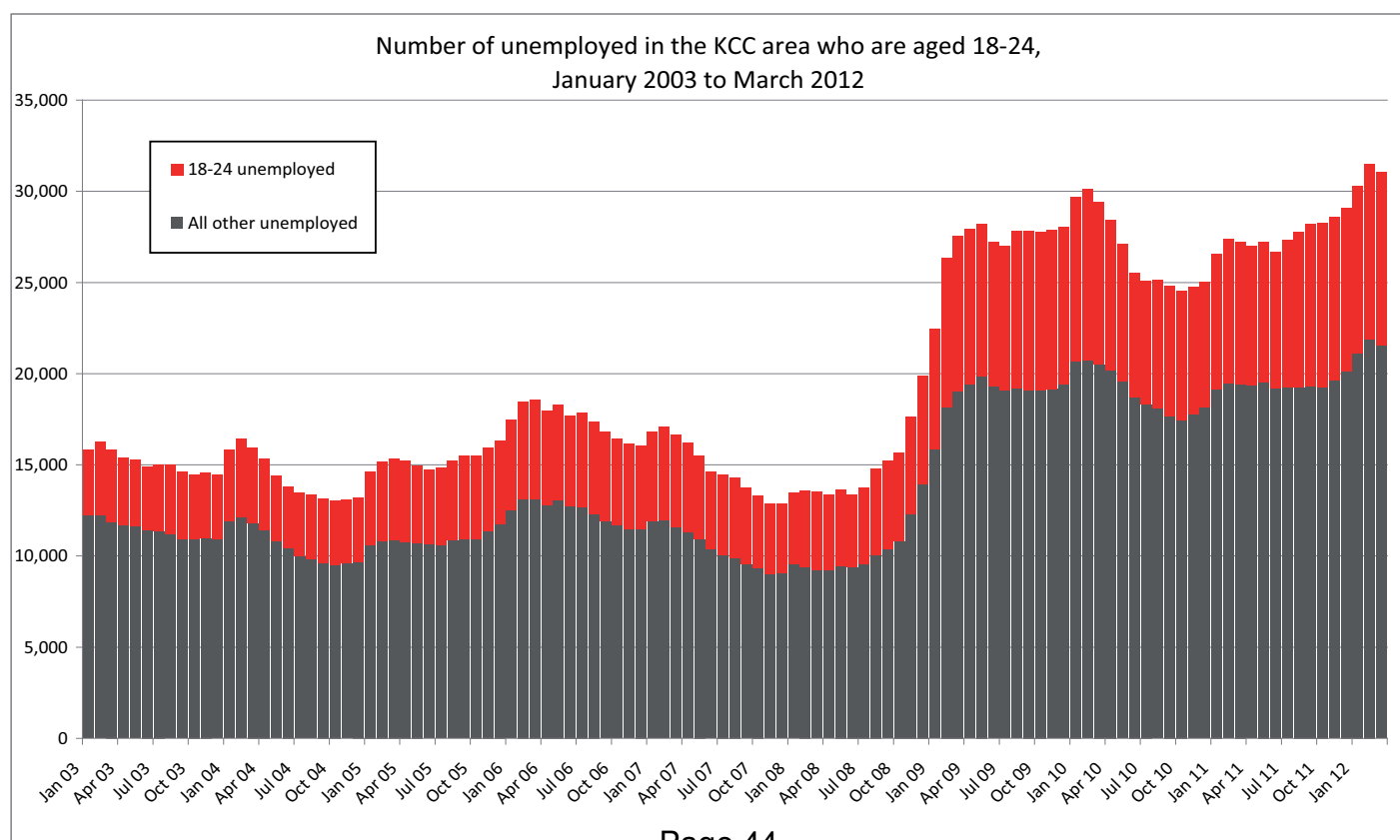
There is already significant activity to increase apprenticeships. The recent launch of the **Kent Jobs for Kent's Young People** initiative is showing positive signs of impact, with over 200 apprenticeships pledged. This new apprenticeship campaign is designed to engage and incentivise employers to take on more young people. By pooling various employment subsidies and £2 million from Kent County Council it enables employers to take up a grant and offer apprenticeships for lower salary costs, and receive help with recruitment so that bureaucracy is kept to a minimum.

This builds on the success of the **Kent Apprenticeship scheme** which already supports about 1500 young people aged 16-19 years. Our aim is to double the number of apprenticeships by 2015. Success will require better information and communication with employers about what is available, better advice for young people about apprenticeship schemes and more joined up working between KCC, schools, colleges, training providers and other agencies including Job Centre Plus.

Our strategy includes support for the development of more apprenticeships delivered in schools. The range of apprentices employed by schools has been expanded to include teaching assistants, sports coaches, catering and ground maintenance, and science and ICT technicians to meet the target of 50% of schools employing an apprentice by 2015. This will include Level 3 apprenticeships.

We continue to actively recruit apprentices to the Kent Apprenticeship scheme, which has an average 65% achievement rate. We need to improve this to be at least in line with the overall Kent rate of 74%, if not better. For example, KCC has supported the employment of 69 vulnerable young people in apprenticeships by paying their salary for 12 months and providing co-ordinated support to them and their employers throughout the apprenticeship period. The Vulnerable Learners Project has now been extended into a phase 2, with a further 36 vulnerable young people to be supported by the programme. Over 500 young people have been employed by KCC as apprentices and 80% who achieve their framework go into full time permanent employment. We will be reviewing the programme, targeting key units within

Chart 4



KCC, as we have done with Kent Highways Service, the Contact Centre and the Youth Service this year, and focusing on raising the achievement rate of those following apprenticeship programmes.

Targeted Support

We have a number of policy and programme developments that will be particularly relevant for some of the young people who would fall into our targeted support cohort.

As a key element of our Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy, we are developing an **Integrated Adolescent Support Service** which will focus on the following target groups of young people age 11-19 who are, or likely to be, among those who:

- have poor outcomes at ages 16 and 19
- follow an alternative curriculum from age 14 onwards
- are permanently excluded, or at risk of permanent exclusion, from school
- have high rates of absence from school or do not attend
- present challenging and anti-social behaviour in and out of school
- engage in misuse of alcohol and drugs
- are at risk of physical and emotional harm
- are young offenders involved in the criminal justice system
- make up the 12% of 16-19 year olds that do not participate in education or work based training
- make up the 20% of young people that do not have the basic qualifications to get a skilled job
- are NEET
- are 16-19 year olds unemployed

This targeted service works in an integrated way with our Kent Troubled Families programme, providing a more coordinated approach for disadvantaged young people who are most vulnerable to poor outcomes.

Conclusion

These initiatives and the strategic priorities set out in this document represent one of Kent County Council's major goals; to change the life chances and employment prospects of young people and in turn the future prosperity and growth of Kent as one of the best places to live in the UK. Our strategy is intended to make a significant contribution to improving the local economy, increasing youth employment and raising educational and skill levels and qualifications among young people. Its success will mean life changing benefits for many 14 to 24 year olds in Kent. We look forward to working with existing partners, as well as creating new partnerships to help make a greater difference for Kent young people.

APPENDIX I

Kent Performance Profile

Skills levels are a big determinant to how successful people are and too many young people in Kent leave full-time education without a full complement of basic skills and without ambition.⁷ Kent lags behind the rest of the South East in terms of workforce qualification levels, as illustrated in the table below, which compares the percentage of 16-64 year olds with different qualification levels in Kent and the South East region.

Qualification Level ¹	Kent Numbers	Kent Percentage	South East Percentage
NVQ 4 and above	263,600	30	33.9
NVQ 3 and above	436,900	49.7	53.8
NVQ 2 and above	605,000	68.9	70.8
NVQ 1 and above	724,200	82.4	84.1
Other quals	52,300	6.0	7.5
No quals	102,400	11.7	8.5

The quality of education for 14-19 year olds in Kent is variable, and although most young people do well and have very clear progression pathways to successful further and higher education and employment, too many young people experience

failure early on and do not have access to the kinds of learning they need to progress to better skills and qualifications. The system is designed well for academic routes that lead to further and higher education but is not so well-designed for work related, technical, vocational and professional pathways that lead to employment and work based learning at age 19.

Attainment by Age 16

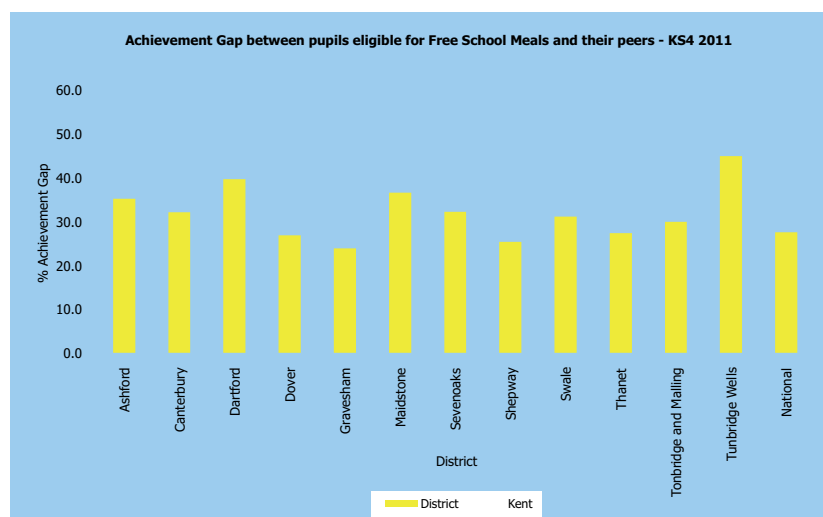
Key Stage 4 standards have improved year on year and are just above similar areas and in line with the national average for five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics (61%). However the gaps in Secondary school performance at GCSE are wide, and again are worse amongst those young people who face the greatest disadvantage.

- only 28% of pupils on free school meals attained five good GCSEs in 2012, which is well below the 35% national average
- 12% of looked after children and 24% of pupils with special educational needs achieved five good GCSEs in 2012

Chart 5

Key Stage Four Attainment by District 2011
Achievement Gap between pupils eligible for Free School Meals and their peers (NI 102)

District	Not Eligible for FSM	Eligible for FSM	Percentage Gap
	% achieving 5+ A*-C grades including English and Maths	% achieving 5+ A*-C grades including English and Maths	
Ashford	58.1	22.9	35.2
Canterbury	57.1	25.0	32.1
Dartford	70.3	30.7	39.6
Dover	54.3	27.5	26.8
Gravesham	55.0	31.2	23.8
Maidstone	69.6	33.1	36.6
Sevenoaks	47.1	14.9	32.2
Shepway	59.0	33.7	25.3
Swale	60.6	29.5	31.1
Thanet	53.1	25.8	27.3
Tonbridge and Malling	64.4	34.5	29.9
Tunbridge Wells	82.0	37.1	44.9
Kent	62.5	28.8	33.7
National	62.2	34.7	27.5



Source: EPAS October 2011 Release, January 2011 School Census and DfE Statistical First Release 2011
Contact: Management Information Unit 01622 694683

- boys do significantly less well than girls, with only 55% achieving five good GCSEs with English and mathematics compared to 63% for girls
- of the 40% of 16 year olds who do not achieve a Level 2 qualification with English and mathematics, fewer than half go on to achieve a Level 3 qualification by age 19.

It is a significant challenge for the Kent economy and the education system in the county if nearly half of all 16 year old boys are not educated to a standard that would enable them to access an apprenticeship or progress to many of the vocational and academic pathways that are available post 16.

Attainment by Age 19

Nearly two thirds of 16-18 year olds (62%) are in school sixth forms and the quality of provision is mostly good or better (69%) as judged by Ofsted. A-Level results have steadily improved, although on a number of measures Kent is below the national average. The number of young people achieving Level 2 qualifications by the age of 19 through school sixth forms or FE colleges is in line with similar areas,

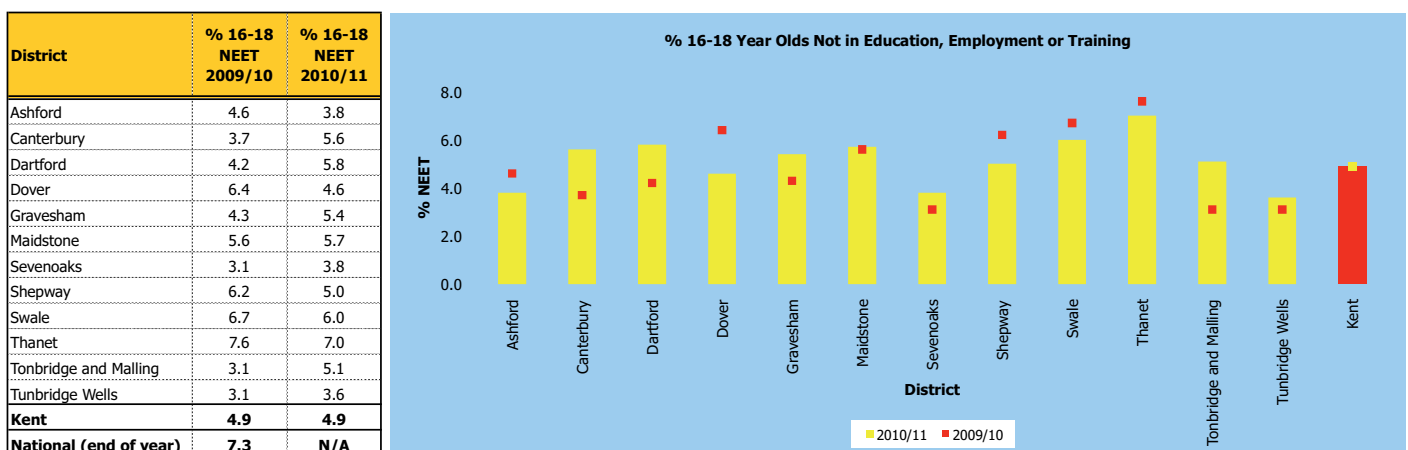
but too many 16-19 year olds (13.6%) spend two years on courses and achieve no improvement in their Level 2 qualification.

As with every other area of education in the County, the standards and skills achieved by young people aged 19 from low income backgrounds, while improved, are below the national average and the gaps (32% in Kent compared to 25% nationally) between outcomes for the most vulnerable 19 year olds and their peers are not closing quickly enough. This significantly reduces their employability and access to apprenticeships and other vocational qualifications, compared to young people from more advantaged backgrounds.

This is persistent and needs to be addressed more effectively when children are younger and at every stage of education, with more targeted teaching and support. Research has shown that around 90% of young people with highly educated parents will obtain GCSEs grades A-C at age 16, while this figure is only around half for those with parents having only grades D-G at GCSE or equivalent. Similarly, it is well known that qualification levels are closely related to employment stability. Highly educated parents are

Chart 6

Percentage of 16-18 Year Olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) by District 2010/11



Source: Connexions Kent and DfE Statistical Release

therefore also more likely to be employed parents. As a consequence, the effects of school attainment and parental education and employment combine and reinforce each other. While virtually no young people with grades A-C at GCSE at age 16 and living with highly educated and employed parents drop out of a 'successful' learning to work trajectory, this is the outcome for almost one in three young people obtaining few or no GCSEs at 16 and living with unemployed parents holding low qualifications. This highlights the need for more targeted earlier intervention for those at most risk of disengagement and under-achievement.

We have been relatively successful in engaging young people (16-19) in education and training, and have kept the figure for those not in employment, education or training (NEET) at a comparatively lower level than levels nationally. However, as the NEET figures increase and earlier success does not carry through to the 18 to 24 year olds, more effective action is needed. Youth unemployment figures reinforce the need for further action with 18 to 24 year olds, accounting for nearly a third of all unemployment in Kent.

Participation and Employment Rates

The participation rate for 16 and 17 year olds in Kent is 88%, compared to 93% nationally. Of these, 83% are in full time education, a small number are in work based learning or training and the remainder are in jobs without training or NEET. In the early months of 2012 there were 2577 16-18 year olds (6.3%) who were NEET. The largest numbers are in Dover, Shepway and Swale, and in Thanet the percentage rises to nearly 10%. The majority of those who are NEET or in jobs without training are in the 17-18 year old age group. If we are to improve this situation and achieve full participation by 2015, nearly 6000 more young people aged 16-18 will need to be engaged more successfully in education or employment with training over the next 3 years.

Many young people are still choosing to look for low skill employment at ages 16, 17 and 18 despite rising youth unemployment and the contraction in low skilled jobs. Kent's education and skills providers need to prepare for the Raising of the Participation Age in a way which sensitively supports young people for this change and engages employers in this process to offer employment with suitable skill training.

Consequently, there needs to be closer alignment between young people's ambitions and learning pathways and the opportunities that exist in the local economy.⁸ We need to develop new models of school and employer partnerships, step up the number of apprenticeships and guide young people to participate in learning and training that will lead to better local employment.

At present in Kent there are real gaps in what is needed to support young people to access employment. There is no part time employment with training for 16-19 year olds; there are no pre-apprenticeship programmes, no vocational and technical qualifications with meaningful work experience and no academic courses with meaningful work experience. These are significant gaps in our provision. It is essential therefore to increase work based learning to secure better routes to employment. The challenge overall is therefore to improve outcomes for this age group by improving learning pathways 16-19 and the quality and range of vocational education and training, including enabling more young people to take up apprenticeships.

If these opportunities do not become more available and lead to better outcomes, we will not succeed in ensuring that all young people participate in learning and work based training to age 18 by 2015.

APPENDIX 2

Targets and Performance Measures

If this Strategy is successful we will achieve the following outcomes by 2016. We will monitor performance against these measures and report progress and improvements on an annual basis. The key targets for success and performance measures are:

1. Key Stage 4 attainment will be amongst the best for our statistical neighbours and improve to at least 70% of pupils attaining 5 good GCSEs including English and mathematics.
2. There will be a significant impact on unemployment among 18-24 year olds so that current levels reduce by 4000 to below 2008 levels.
3. The number of assisted employment opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities will increase by 10%.
4. Each district in Kent will have effective partnership working for 14-19 year olds, involving KCC, schools, colleges, work based learning providers, employers and other agencies.
5. Attainment in English and mathematics will improve so that at least 50% of 16 year olds that do not attain Level 2 will achieve the qualification by age 17.
6. The number of young people, especially those from low income backgrounds aged 16 with skills below level 2, to achieve a level 2 qualification and progress to level 3 by age 18 will increase by 20%.
7. The number of 16-19 year olds who follow courses and do not raise their level of qualification will decrease to below 5%.
8. Advanced Level performance in Kent will be above the national average on all measures.
9. There will be improved participation, provision and outcomes for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities and all young people with learning difficulties and disabilities aged 16-19 in Special Schools will have access to appropriate provision.
10. All young people aged 16-19 will be tracked by the LA working in partnership with schools and colleges so that their participation can be monitored, as required by statutory duty.
11. Youth Employment and Learning Zones in Thanet, Swale, Shepway, Gravesham, and Dover will reduce unemployment for 16 to 24 to below the national average.
12. There will be full participation in education and work based training for all 16-18 year olds following year on year reductions in the NEET figures to no more than 1%.
13. The employability skills of 19 year olds will have improved, especially in English and mathematics, so that level 2 attainment at age 19 is well above the national average.
14. The outcomes for 19 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds will be above the national average and the achievement gap between this group and other students will have reduced by 10% from the 2012 baseline.
15. We will have established a successful pre-apprenticeship and level 1 programme for 17 year olds who are unable to achieve a level 2 apprenticeship.
16. The uptake of Level 2 and 3 vocational training in skills shortage areas will increase by 10%.
17. The KCC Apprenticeship scheme will continue with at least 88 apprentices taken on each year, totalling 400 successful apprenticeships delivered by KCC by 2016.
18. At least 50% of schools will have provided one or more apprenticeships which have been taken up successfully by young people.

APPENDIX 3

The Role of the Local Authority

National policy recognises that local authorities make a difference, and where local authorities have effective strategies and 14-19 partnership arrangements in place participation rates and outcomes are better. The role of the local authority is, therefore, to provide strategic leadership and coordination, promote effective partnership working and effective commissioning, and to bring together all the available resources needed to ensure success for this 14-24 strategy. Kent is a local authority with clear ambition for better outcomes for young people and a strong sense of its leadership role in developing an improved education and skills system.

The Local Authority also has clear statutory duties in relation to 16-19 year olds: to secure suitable education and training, support young people to participate and target support to those who are NEET. Local authorities also have a duty to undertake learning difficulty and disability assessments setting out the education and training for those young people who had statements of Special Educational Needs at school. Furthermore, Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 places a duty on local authorities to make available to young people below the age of 19 and relevant adults (i.e. those aged 20 and over but under 25 with learning difficulties) support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education and training.

The Statutory Duty for Raising the Participation Age

The Education and Skills Act 2008, also places a duty on all young people to participate in education or training until their 18th birthday. The local authority has new duties to:

- promote the effective participation in education or training of all 16 and 17 year olds resident in their area; and
- make arrangements to identify young people resident in their area who are not participating.

These complement the existing duties to:

- secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all 16-19 year olds
- encourage, enable and assist young people to participate
- have processes in place to deliver the 'September Guarantee' of a suitable education or training place for every young person
- track young people's engagement and participation.

In carrying out these responsibilities the local authority should respond to those young people who are at risk of not participating and low achievement, or who do not participate, by providing targeted support to improve their skills and qualifications and access to employment with training.

When responsibility for health improvement is transferred to local authorities, funding through the health grant can be used to include targeted support to those young people whose lifestyle choices, for example drug and alcohol misuse, prevent them from participating in education and training.

APPENDIX 4

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Danish Oil and Natural Gas company (Dong Energy) Apprenticeships at the Swale Skills Centre

KCC has supported the development of the Swale Skill Centre in Sittingbourne. The Skill Centre is at the heart of the Eurolink Business Park, a large industrial estate with several large companies and numerous SMEs, many of which operate in the engineering sector.

The Centre has specialised in engineering and has state of the art equipment for mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, control systems and advanced CAD/CAM. The centre is managed by Sittingbourne Community College and is a sub-contractor of East Kent College, but there is access to pupils from other schools in the area. Pupils from 14 years upwards take vocational qualifications at Levels 2 and 3, with plans to offer Level 4 (foundation degree) in 2012.

In the last two years, the Centre has further specialised in sustainable technologies, particularly wind farm operation and maintenance.

The Centre is one of the founding members of a Sustainable Technologies Consortium involving a number of training providers across North Kent. This was initiated in response to requests from DONG Energy, a large wind farm company and major partner in the London Array, which is the world's largest offshore wind farm currently under construction in the Thames Estuary. The Consortium was created to co-ordinate the training offer to the wind farm sector but it also has a wide remit to promote engineering in general.

In September 2011 DONG Energy worked closely with the Swale Skill Centre to recruit nine new Apprentices. For a three year Level 3 apprenticeship with all of their training provided by the Swale Skill Centre. These are the first such apprenticeships in the UK, and the DONG employees are undertaking a new nationally accredited qualification designed by the

staff at Swale Skill Centre. In doing so the staff have drawn on best national and international practice and responded to the needs of employers.

There are plans to double the number of DONG apprentices in 2012, while other wind farm companies, such as Vattenfall and Vestas are showing a keen interest in adding to this number.

The outcomes of this case study are that Kent now has a single point of entry for apprentices into the skills and training system for the renewable industries, which has removed the burdensome process in programme development which can quash initial employer interest.

Case Study 2: Vulnerable Learner Apprenticeships

David⁹ is a young offender who started his apprenticeship in April 2011. He lives with his mother, stepfather and older brother. His father lives locally and he sees him regularly. When he was a young child, David witnessed domestic violence between his father and mother and often saw his brother arrested by the police.

In 2009 (aged 15), David started to get in trouble with the police. He was convicted of theft from a motor vehicle and completed a three month Referral Order. In 2010 he reoffended and was sentenced to a one year Youth Rehabilitation Order for a Public Order offence (fighting) and 'cruelty to animals resulting in injury' (kicking pigeons). However, he has complied with all elements of his community sentence and his Order is currently in the process of being taken back to court for early revocation.

David attended mainstream education and completed education gaining 4 GCSEs, despite several fixed term exclusions for disruptive behaviour and bullying. He started at Canterbury College after leaving school but left after feeling frustrated, considering it too classroom-based for a construction course.

David achieved 4 GCSEs in English, Maths, Science and Wood products and Basic Construction Skills Level 1 certificate.

David wanted to qualify in a Construction trade and did not want to learn via full-time studies at college.

The apprenticeship appealed to him because he could continue his studies whilst working and earning a wage.

David and his mother report that his apprenticeship has 'changed his life'. He feels that he has a career plan and will qualify in a trade 'for life'. He states that he is happier, more confident and looks forward to work every day. His mother and step-father both report a marked improvement in David's mood and attitude and in his overall behaviour at home. His risk of re-offending is now assessed as low and his youth offending order is being taken back to court for early revocation.

The outcomes of this case study are that Kent has a good base on which to build the further development of a wide range of options and pathways into employment for young people.

APPENDIX 5

Kent Employment Sectors

Sector contributions to the Kent Economy

The approximate make up of the business sector profile of Kent, by number of employees and output, is described below:

Industry Sector	2011 Employment ²	%	Output £mill ³	%
Agriculture, Fishing, Mining, Electricity/Gas/Water	21,400	4.0	1,380	7.1
Manufacturing	38,400	7.1	1,739	9.0
Construction	31,900	5.9	1,663	8.6
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods	98,500	18.2	2,879	14.9
Transport and storage	28,100	5.2	1,161	6.0
Hotels and restaurants	34,000	6.3	470	2.4
Information and communication	11,900	2.2	626	3.2
Financial intermediation	15,150	2.8	1,067	5.5
Real estate, renting and business activities	7,000	1.3	2,570	13.3
Professional, scientific and technical activities	30,300	5.6	527	2.7
Administrative and support service activities	39,500	7.3	526	2.7
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	29,200	5.4	1,168	6.0
Education	60,600	11.2	1,048	5.4
Health and social work	73,000	13.5	1,541	8.0
Arts, entertainment and recreation	11,300	2.1	Incl below	0.0
Other community, social and personal service activities	9,700	1.8	943	4.9
All Industries	541,000*	100	19,300	100

* Not including self employment

Kent Sector Skills Development

In January 2009 KCC published its economic regeneration strategy document "Unlocking Kent's Potential - a framework for regeneration." Kent is a diverse economy and "Unlocking Kent's Potential" identifies the need for sector based strategies, to support those sectors where Kent has existing business strengths and to support new sectors with opportunities for growth. Focussing on key business sectors will raise Kent's economic performance.

The KCC Regeneration and Economy Division are developing sector based strategies in the following key areas:

- Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and Services sector (LCEGS)
- Creative and Media
- Health and Social Care
- Construction
- Land based industries.
- To complement this work, KCC is also developing Sector Based Skills Strategies which aim to:
 - Describe the current provision in Kent by key sector area.
 - Identify gaps in this provision.
 - Propose actions to address the gaps.

Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and Services sector (LCEGS)

Summary of key findings

- Young people interested in construction, engineering and agriculture need to be aware of issues of sustainability.
- Providers of these courses should respond by adding units to existing courses or stand alone courses in sustainability. There are a number of suitable units that providers could consider at level 2.
- The future of sustainable technologies in Kent will be based around small business and consultancy. Large scale projects, such as the London Array, will provide limited long term job opportunities. Retrofit of existing housing stock, followed by new build to current and future specification, are key skill growth areas.

Creative and Media Sector

Summary of key findings

- Kent is very well provided with courses that support the creative skills requirements of the sector. However the sector is reporting significant skills shortages in business, management and leadership skills.
- Providers of creative courses could respond by adding units to existing courses or stand alone courses to develop business skills. There are a number of suitable units that providers could consider at level 2.

Health and Social Care Sector

Summary of key findings

- Staff turnover in the NHS, particularly jobs at NVQ Levels 2 and 3, is very significant. Although overall staff levels in the NHS won't grow over the next ten years, replacement demand will remain large.
- The Care Sector in the South East is behind the minimum qualification standards for NVQ Level 2 and NVQ Level 4.
- Kent has a large number of Level 1 qualification aims being achieved in FE Colleges that are not being turned into Level 2 progressions.

Construction Sector

Summary of key findings

- Total construction output in the region is expected to increase at an annual average rate of 2.4% between 2011 and 2015, with most growth skewed towards 2014 and 2015.
- 14-19 participation in vocational courses in this sector is high at Levels 1 and 2, but drops away significantly at Level 3.
- To meet future demand for skills in sustainable construction, providers can offer units to 14-19 year olds that provide introductions to sustainability.
- There is a wide range of provision for traditional construction skills in Kent, but gaps have been identified (as follows):
 - Painting and decorating at Level 2 and 3
 - Trowel occupations that are not delivered as an apprenticeship e.g. BTEC at Levels 2 and 3
 - Heating systems; design and installation at level 2 and 3
 - Plant operations; usually NVQ work based.
 - Transport and logistics; Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) Introductory
 - Certificate in Logistics and Transport level 2/ CILT Certificate in Logistics and Transport.
 - Scaffolding: For example Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme (CISRS) NVQ 2/3 for existing employees.

Land Based Sector

Summary of key findings

- The Land Based sector is predicted to experience declining employment over the next decade.
- The Land Based sector is part of a wider Food Sector that is becoming increasingly mechanised, complex and subject to legislation.
- The following skills will be important for the sector over the next 5 years: Business, management and entrepreneurship skills; Technical/job specific skills and essential skills.
- There are opportunities for greater progression between Level 2 and Level 3 courses, and promotion of the sector to learners.

Appendix 6 – Resources

The Skills & Employability Service, within the KCC Education Learning and Skills Directorate is primarily responsible for the delivery, co-ordination and monitoring of the 14-24 Employment, Learning and Skills Strategy.

The Skills and Employability Service works with all the partners listed in this document, and across KCC departments, in order to:

- equip young people with the skills they need to progress to further learning, employment or self employment
- match the provision of learning providers to the needs of employers
- ensure young people are fully informed of the opportunities available to them
- and provide additional support to the most vulnerable young people

Along with senior management support and policy development, and team operations and administrative support, the following resources will be directed towards delivery of the strategy, on a locality basis:

West Kent: Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Dartford, Gravesham

Mid-Kent: Maidstone, Ashford, Swale, Canterbury

East Kent: Thanet, Dover, Shepway

Role	FTE	Responsibilities
Skills and Employability Manager	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Officer for planning, implementing and monitoring the strategy for the locality. Maintain effective relationships and networks of education and training providers. With partners ensure all young people have access to quality education skills and training. Overall management of apprenticeship programmes, programmes for vulnerable learners, the new CXK contract and Skills Force programmes.
Participation and Progression Officer	3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With partners ensure there are appropriate and high quality progression routes from level 1 to level 4 onto vocational programmes and apprenticeships. Track and Monitor the 11 to19 (24 for LLDD learners) curriculum offer. With partners forecast, identify need and develop new provision and high quality information, advice, guidance and support systems as required. Monitor and evaluate impact and quality of reengagement of learners excluded from school or college, particularly vulnerable learners. Establish effective working systems and practices between Families and Social Care, Kent Health Authorities and the Voluntary sector. Facilitate CEIAG, NEET to EET groups
Employability Programmes Officer	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, manage & deliver employer engagement & employer communications. Support the development of apprenticeships. Develop systems and databases to inform planning & commissioning of apprenticeships. Identify appropriate support systems and progression pathways into apprenticeships for 16, 17 and 18 year old learners. With partners develop transition and bridging programmes for 16-18 learners. Develop strategies which link to the Area Prospectus and Common Application process. Disseminate national and regional developments on employability programmes and apprenticeship schemes.
Apprenticeship Development Officer	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the Kent Apprenticeship programme working with schools, other providers, employers and young people.
Learner Support Information Officer	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act as the main point of contact for the Area Prospectus and Common Application Process. Provide a high quality support service to schools/academies, colleges, parent/carers/guardians and young people on a daily basis.

In addition, central support for research, development and delivery will be provided by:

Role	FTE	Responsibilities
Curriculum and Innovation Manger	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of the curriculum to ensure delivery of the Employment, Learning and Skills Strategy.
Early Intervention Manager	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of the Kent Employment Programme. Development of Raising Participation Age (RPA) initiatives and the RPA trials. Development of the Kent Employability Programme. Planning and development of the Kent Choices 4 U database and associated CEIAG activities.
Kent Employment Programme delivery team - Operations Manager - Finance and Admin Lead - Project Officer (Marketing and Communications) - Apprentice	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery and monitoring of Kent Employment Programme

KCC will work with funding agencies and delivery partners to ensure that it can maximise the resources that are targeted at delivery of the strategy. These will include:

- Co-ordinating activities with the Youth Contract provider in Kent, Skills Training UK.
- Encouraging new providers to bid for “zero funded” contracts to develop capacity for flexible learning for 16-19 year olds.
- Support learning providers in the development of provision for the new Study Programmes funding.
- Utilise Big Society funding to develop capacity.
- Work with successful second round DWP Innovation Fund providers to provide support for disengaged young people.

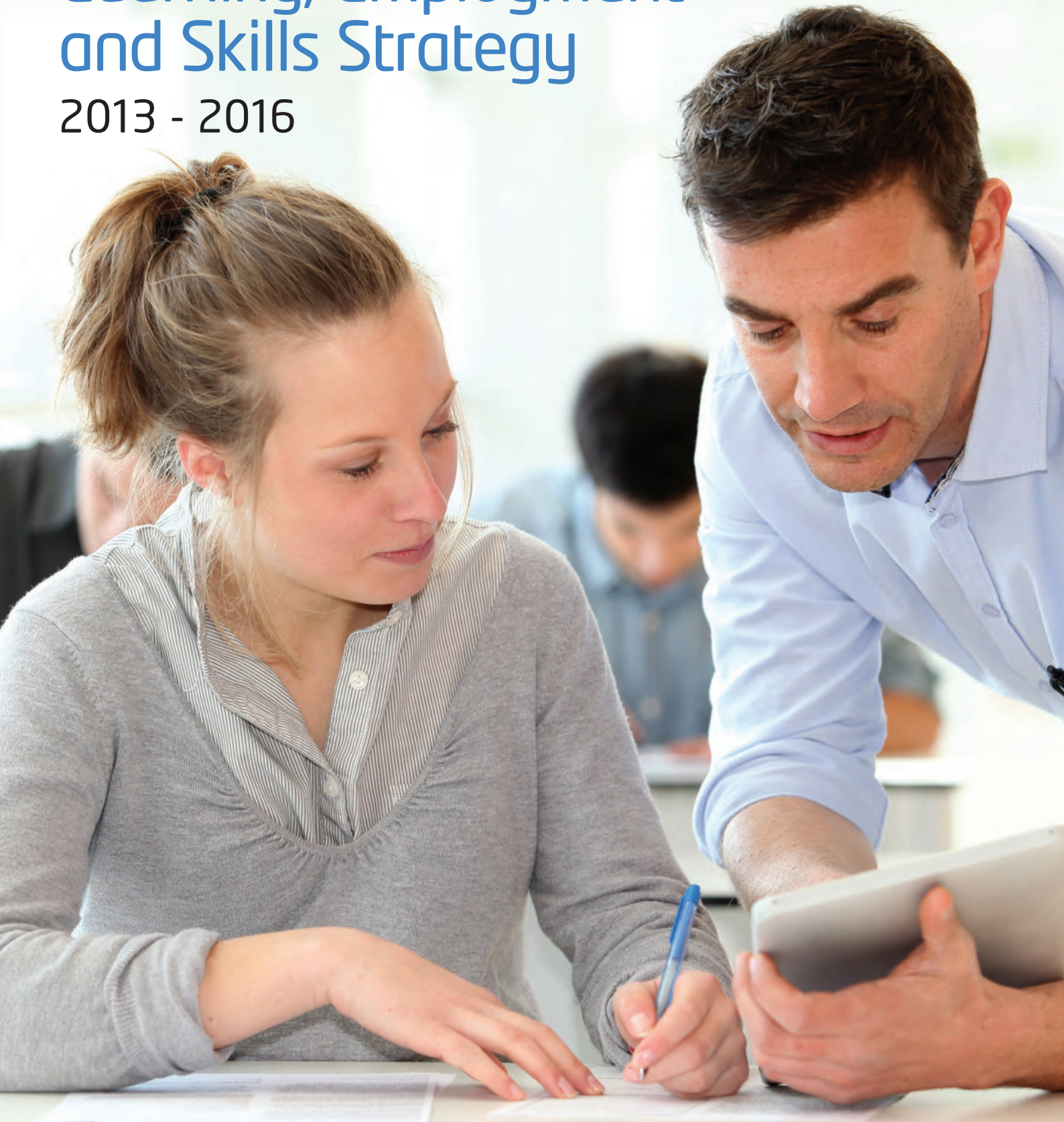
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14 - 24

Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy

2013 - 2016



Our ambition is for all young people in Kent to become better qualified and more employable; to be able to participate and achieve success in education and work based training at least until the age of 18; and to ensure more 18 to 24 year olds can access higher learning or sustained employment that is appropriate to their needs and relevant to the local and national economy.

This strategy is designed to link the world of learning to the world of work more successfully, and to bring about more rapid transformation in young people's skills, qualifications and employability through the following four key areas of focus.

1. Raise Attainment

Attainment at 16 is the single most important factor in securing participation, learning and achievement between the ages of 16 and 19, especially attainment in English and mathematics. And building on this, achieving level 3 qualifications is vitally important in enabling young people to access professional employment opportunities and progress to higher education, for example to university or onto higher apprenticeships.

Where are we now?

61% of Kent's 16 year olds are achieving five A*-C GCSEs, including English and mathematics, which is just above the national average. However, this means that nearly 40% of young people are not achieving this level of attainment which risks limiting their prospects to low skilled, low paid employment and a high risk of unemployment if they do not progress to meaningful learning and training pathways post 16. Furthermore, only 55% of boys are achieving five GCSEs, compared to 63% of girls. For level 3 attainment, Kent achieves below the national average.

Where do we want to be?

In order to give young people the best chance to progress and achieve good outcomes, we want to continue raising the attainment level for GCSEs and to significantly increase the number of 16-19 year olds taking up and achieving level 2 and 3 qualifications so they can access vocational and professional pathways and higher level apprenticeships, thereby widening participation in both academic and vocational education pathways to age 18. Some of our targets for 2016 to achieve this will include:

- Key Stage 4 attainment will be amongst the best for our comparable statistical neighbours and improve to at least 70% of pupils attaining 5 good GCSEs including English and mathematics.
- The number of 16-19 year olds who achieve no improvement in qualifications will decrease to below 5%.
- The achievement gaps for disadvantaged young people aged 16-19, for level 2 and 3 qualifications will be below the national figures.
- Advanced level performance in Kent will be above the national average on all measures.



2. Improve and Extend Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships

In order that all 14 to 19 year olds can access and succeed in following an appropriate path of learning, a high quality education and training offer will be developed. This will be well matched to students' and employers' needs, with clear progression to higher levels of qualification and critically, employer involvement in the programmes' design and suitability for the labour market.

Where are we now?

We are building on good developments in recent years, namely the success of the Kent Vocational Programme which has seen the establishment of 29 vocational centres and specialist workshops with over 8000 young people engaged in programmes that offered a wide range of work related qualifications. Kent is bucking regional trends for the number of young people taking up apprenticeships, with increases of 16% for 16-18 year olds and 13%

for 18-24 year olds, despite the current economic climate. KCC's own Kent Apprenticeship scheme already supports about 1500 young people aged 16-19, and increased its intake from 86 starts in 2011 to 113 in 2012.

However, there is much more we can do to build and strengthen the vocational offer for young people. We need to tackle the lack of clear progression to higher vocational qualifications, the mismatch between some of the courses and the needs of local businesses, the limited attention to level 2 literacy and numeracy in some programmes and the lack of flexibility in working arrangements between schools and other providers. Young people are also experiencing barriers which prevent them from accessing apprenticeships, due to a mistaken assertion by providers and employers that there is a minimum level 2 qualification entry requirement. This is consequently denying a large proportion of young people from pursuing a learning pathway that is appropriate and relevant to their needs and aspirations. Tackling this is a key part of the strategy.

We've already started...

...by launching *Kent Jobs for Kent Young People*. This campaign is designed to engage and incentivise employers to take on more young people through apprenticeships, offering grants and support with recruitment to reduce bureaucracy. Over 100 apprenticeships have already been pledged.

Where do we want to be?

We want to increase the take up and completion of apprenticeships, and boost this by proactively working with young people, providers and employers to dispel the myth that there are qualification entry requirements. We will focus on developing more apprenticeships delivered in schools as they form a substantial employer across the county. The range of school based apprenticeships has been expanded and will include opportunities at level 3. Underpinning all of this, employer engagement needs to be greatly improved in order to expand apprenticeship opportunities and to ensure that vocational courses meet the needs of the local economy and can lead more directly to employment in Kent. Some of our targets to achieve this include:

- The uptake of Level 2 and 3 vocational training in skills shortage areas will increase by 10%.
- The KCC Apprenticeship scheme will continue with at least 88 apprentices taken on each year, totalling 400 successful apprenticeships delivered by KCC by 2016.
- We will have established a successful pre-apprenticeship and level 1 programme for 17 year olds who are unable to achieve a level 2 apprenticeship.
- At least half of schools will have provided one or more apprenticeships which have been taken up successfully by young people.

3. Increase Participation and Employment

Participation in education or training for all young people until the age of 18 is a key priority for Kent, and is enshrined in legislation which will fully come into force by 2015, referred to as Raising the Participation Age. This will encompass a range of learning, apprenticeship and employment with training opportunities, and is not just limited to

staying on at school. The successful transition from learning into work is a critical factor, as better qualified and prepared young people will have better chances of securing skilled employment opportunities.

Where are we now?

The participation rate for 16 and 17 year olds in Kent is 88% compared to 93% nationally. Our previous success of reducing the number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) year on year did not continue into the economic recession, and NEET figures are now increasing. The annual figure currently stands at 6.3%, equating to 2577 16-18 year olds. Youth unemployment is even more challenging. There are 10,000 unemployed 18-24 year olds in Kent (just under 8000 excluding Medway), which is a third of the total unemployed figure. 18-24 year olds have the highest rate of unemployment at 6.5%, which although slightly below the national average, contains five hotspot districts that exceed the national figures: Shepway, Swale, Dover and Gravesham have rates between 8 and 9.7%, whilst Thanet's is 13.8%.

Where do we want to be?

If we are to achieve full participation by 2015, nearly 6000 more young people aged 16-18 will need to be engaged more successfully in education or employment with training over the next three years. We therefore need much more comprehensive education and training provision beyond 16, which offers higher level qualifications with better routes to skilled employment for Kent's young people. This must include better work based learning routes, such as pre-apprenticeship programmes, part time employment with training and both vocational and academic courses with meaningful work experience. The Strategy will focus on developing these options.

We need to significantly reduce youth unemployment and put in place better systems for



local employers and learning providers to work together so that the courses offered meet the needs of local businesses and we can secure the higher levels of qualified young people we need in the key growth sectors of Kent's economy. We will develop Youth Employment and Learning Zones in the five unemployment hotspot areas; identifying the needs and issues of unemployed young people in those areas, working with partners to pool resources to improve training and employment opportunities and provide better information and access to local employers and job opportunities. We will also work with partners to ensure unemployed 18-24 year olds benefit from schemes such as the Youth Contract, which provides extra support through Jobcentre Plus.

Some of our targets to achieve this include:

- There will be a significant impact on unemployment among 18-24 year olds so that current levels reduce by 4000 to below 2008 levels.
- There will be full participation in education and work based training for all 16-18 year olds following year on year reductions in the NEET figures to no more than 1%.
- Youth Employment and Learning Zones in Thanet, Swale, Shepway, Gravesham, and Dover will reduce unemployment for 16 to 24 to below the national average.

We've already started...

...by launching a county-wide awareness campaign for *Raising the Participation Age*, including holding an awareness week for those affected from September 2013 and providing guidance and briefing sessions for school staff. We have also written to pupils and parents, informing them of the changes and how to access *Kentchoices4U*, the country's largest and most used online prospectus that provides information for making post-16 choices about education and training.

4. Target Support for Vulnerable Young People

Although the majority of Kent's young people achieve good educational and employment outcomes, there is a large group of young people who experience challenges and who require additional support in order to enable them to achieve positive outcomes and help them to make a successful transition into adulthood.

Where are we now?

The number of 16-18 year olds who are NEET is rising, and there is over representation from vulnerable and disadvantaged young people who are in the care of the local authority, care leavers, adopted young people, young offenders, teenage parents and refugees and asylum seekers. For another group of young people over represented in our NEETs figures, there is insufficient provision for 16-19 year olds with learning difficulties and disabilities to help them access further learning and achieve independent living and employment. Nearly half of 16 year olds attending Special Schools do not have access to appropriate post 16 education, work based learning or training.

The poor levels of participation and limited progression for these vulnerable groups is fed by low attainment at age 16. Only 12% of children in care and 24% of pupils with special educational needs achieved five good GCSEs in 2012. Disadvantage remains a barrier: only 28% of pupils on Free School Meals gained five good GCSEs, which is well below the national average of 35%, whilst the gap between young people aged 19 from low income backgrounds and their peers in achieving level 3 qualifications stood at 32% in 2012, higher than the national average of 25%.

Where do we want to be?

In order to ensure we give every vulnerable and disadvantaged young person the best chance to access and succeed in education, training and employment opportunities, we will give particular focus to reducing the number of vulnerable young people who become excluded or NEET by improving early intervention, support and pathway planning for those at risk of disengaging. We will improve provision and employment opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and make sure young people in the care system are ready for the world of work. We will also develop more intensive and integrated programmes of support and provision in areas of Kent with the poorest outcomes and prospects for 14-24 year olds. Some of our targets to achieve this include:

- There will be improved participation, provision and outcomes for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, and all young people with learning difficulties and disabilities aged 16-19 in Special Schools will have access to appropriate provision.
- The number of assisted employment opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities will increase by 10%.
- The outcomes for 19 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds will be above the national average and the achievement gap between this group and other students will have reduced by 10% from the 2012 baseline.

We Can't Do It Alone...

Strengthening existing and developing new partnerships with a wide range of providers, agencies and organisations will be crucial in achieving our aims for this Strategy. Kent County Council cannot

We've already started...

...by piloting the *Kent Integrated Adolescent Support Service* in a number of areas across the county. This provides a more coordinated and targeted approach for disadvantaged young people who are most vulnerable to poor outcomes, such as being NEET, permanent exclusion, high rates of absence from school, or engaged in misuse of alcohol and drugs. We have also extended our *Vulnerable Learners Project* into a second phase, to help more vulnerable young people into apprenticeships, such as those with disabilities or young offenders, assisted by KCC by paying their salary for twelve months and providing support to them and their employers throughout the apprenticeship.



accomplish these improvements alone and nor does it expect to. The local authority working in partnership with schools will forge new and wide ranging relationships with FE colleges, work based learning providers and employers. Employers play a pivotal role in these partnerships to enable fit for purpose provision that meets the needs of young people and the local economy. In conjunction with our partners we will establish the Kent Employment, Learning and Skills Partnership Board to oversee and drive the Strategy. At a local level we will develop an effective system of 14-19 partnerships between education and training providers, employers and Jobcentre Plus to deliver coordinated improvements to provision and outcomes.

Young people are also key to our partnership working. We have been listening to their views about priorities and will continue to do so in order to make sure provision meets their needs and the right support and opportunities are available to help them to pursue their preferred education and employment pathways.

The initiatives and strategic priorities set out in the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy represent one of Kent County Council's major goals: to change the life chances and employment prospects of young people and in turn the future prosperity and growth of Kent as one of the best places to live in the UK. Our Strategy is intended to make a significant contribution to improving the local economy and increasing youth employment. Its success will mean life changing benefits for many 16 to 24 year olds, and we look forward to working with existing and new partners to help make a greater difference for Kent's young people.

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14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy: Revised Targets and Performance Measures

1. Key Stage 4 attainment will be amongst the best for our statistical neighbours and improve to at least 70% of pupils attaining 5 good GCSEs including English and mathematics.
2. There will be a significant impact on unemployment among 18-24 year olds so that current levels reduce by 4000 to below 2008 levels.
3. The number of assisted employment opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities will increase by 10%.
4. Each district in Kent will have effective partnership working for 14-19 year olds, involving KCC, schools, colleges, work based learning providers, employers and other agencies.
5. Attainment in English and mathematics will improve so that at least 50% of 16 year olds that do not attain Level 2 will achieve the qualification by age 17.
6. The number of young people, especially those from low income backgrounds, aged 16 with skills below level 2, to achieve a level 2 qualification and progress to level 3 by age 18 will increase by 20%.
7. The number of 16-19 year olds who follow courses and do not raise their level of qualification will decrease to below 5%.
8. Advanced Level performance in Kent will be above the national average on all measures.
9. There will be improved participation, provision and outcomes for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities and all young people with learning difficulties and disabilities aged 16-19 in Special Schools will have access to appropriate provision.
10. All young people aged 16-19 will be tracked by the LA working in partnership with schools and colleges so that their participation can be monitored, as required by statutory duty.
11. Youth Employment and Learning Zones in Thanet, Swale, Shepway, Gravesham, and Dover will reduce unemployment for 16 to 24 to below the national average.
12. There will be full participation in education and work based training for all 16-18 year olds following year on year reductions in the NEET figures to no more than 1%.
13. The employability skills of 19 year olds will have improved, especially in English and mathematics, so that level 2 attainment at age 19 is well above the national average.
14. The outcomes for 19 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds will be above the national average and the achievement gap between this group and other students will have reduced by 10% from the 2012 baseline.

15. We will have established a successful pre-apprenticeship and level 1 programme for 17 year olds who are unable to achieve a level 2 apprenticeship.
16. The uptake of Level 2 and 3 vocational training in skills shortage areas will increase by 10%.
17. The KCC Apprenticeship scheme will continue with at least 88 apprentices taken on each year, totalling 400 successful apprenticeships delivered by KCC by 2016.
18. At least 50% of schools will have provided one or more apprenticeships which have been taken up successfully by young people.



14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy launch

Press release plan

Month	Date	Event	Marketing possibilities
February	25 February	14-24 Strategy launch	Press release to highlight launch of strategy to feature quote from Paul Carter/Mike Whiting
March	4 March	National Careers Week To include:	Press release to coincide with National Careers Week, to highlight raising aspirations and increasing participation, mentioning the following events: - Using the Jobs Fair to promote employment opportunities and apprenticeships
	- 8 March	- Dover Jobs Fair	
	- 13 March	- Kent Choices 4 U Live	- Using KC4U Live to engage young people in raising aspirations and increasing their understanding of Raising the Participation Age
	11 March	National Apprenticeship Week	Press release featuring new case study showcasing success story of an apprentice in Kent. Will use this to re-launch KCC's internal apprenticeship scheme
	TBC	Select Committee recommendations	Press release highlighting recommendations and detailing great work taking place in line with the strategy
April	25 April	Kent 2020	Press release detailing event with special guests, using the event to engage employers with the 14-24 Strategy and promote apprenticeships and employment opportunities
May	18 May	Adult Learners Week	Press release and case study re options for adult learners, using the event to highlight the Strategy's activities to reduce youth unemployment
June	27 June	KEiBA	Press release raising awareness of the winner of the Kent Apprenticeship of the Year, sponsored by KCC
July	12 July	Kent County Show	Press release bringing attention to the event and what's on offer, promoting opportunities for young people